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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

"NO LONGER AN ALIEN, THE ENGLISH JEW":
THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY JEWISH READER AND
LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF THE JEW IN THE WORKS OF
BENJAMIN DISRAELI, MATTHEW ARNOLD, AND GEORGE ELIOT

VOLUME I (CHAPTERS I-VI)

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

BY

MARY A. LINDERMAN

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

JANUARY 1997

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"NO LONGER AN ALIEN THE ENGLISH JEW..."

The title of this dissertation is taken from an article appearing in The Jewish Chronicle at the time of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. It heralds Victoria's reign as a period of increasing tolerance towards the Jews in England:

The suspicion and distrust with which [the Jew] was regarded fifty years ago have vanished....No longer an alien the English Jew is now an integral part of the nation, as closely identified with its interests as any other Englishman.¹

This description of the Queen's reign also underscores the complex image of the Jew as "alien" and "Englishman." It indicates that a major effort of the Jewish community for the previous fifty years had been to "closely identify" with the nation's interests so as to diminish the public's "suspicion and distrust" of the alien Jew. The exhibition illustrates how such cultural practices as national celebrations were used by Anglo-Jews to articulate their relationship to the nation, and to influence the English perception of their community. In this way, the history of Victoria's reign is also that of the emergence of an Anglo-Jewish identity that seeks to

¹"The Queen's Jubilee," The Jewish Chronicle, 17 June 1887, p. 10.

balance the demands of Englishness with those of Jewish distinctiveness.²

The production of literary texts is another cultural practice that participated in the fashioning of Anglo-Jewish identity. This study will analyze how literary texts were used to mediate between the claims of "Englishness" and "Jewishness." It will explore how Benjamin Disraeli's The Wondrous Tale of Alroy (1833) and Tancred (1847) attempt to define a role for Jews in English political life during the emancipation era. Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy (1869) and Literature and Dogma (1873) will be used to demonstrate how Anglo-Jews sometimes used literary representations to articulate their relationship to English cultural and religious values. Finally, George Eliot's Daniel Deronda (1876) will show how the practice of equating Jewish spirituality with Zionism jeopardized the perception of the Jew as an English citizen. The methodology that I use to interpret these texts draws on elements of new historicism as well as other analytical techniques. My analysis emphasizes

²Nineteenth-century Jews and Gentiles identified themselves as racially distinct groups. However, my use of the terms "Englishness" and "Jewishness" is based on the assumption that the terms represent "constructs" and are repeatedly defined in different ways throughout the century. I do not use them to represent essentialized qualities that are inherently linked to race. Instead, I use them to identify the adoption of certain manners, social conventions, and religious beliefs. While the term "Jews" indicates a racially distinct group, the quality of "Jewishness" is continually defined and redefined by the community as it positions itself in post-emancipation society.

that both literary representations of the Jew and the responses of Jewish readers are historically specific and ideologically mediated. Finally, this study is also underwritten by the assumption that literary works are not only the products of ongoing cultural debates, but that they participate in them through their representations of social relations.

A closer examination of the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition will reveal the complexity of these social relations as well as demonstrate the need to consider literary representations of Jews in this complex cultural matrix. This exhibition guaranteed that Anglo-Jews would be active participants in the commemorative activities for the Queen's Jubilee. It included Jewish ecclesiastical art, portraits of Jewish notables, and various historical documents outlining the events of several hundred years of Jewish life in England. Sir Isidore Spielmann³ and several other Jewish notables seemed to have successfully organized an event that recognized both Jewish distinctiveness and the community's ties to England. According to The Jewish Chronicle, this first exhibition of Anglo-Jewish antiquities was especially

³Sir Isidore Spielmann (1854-1925) was originally trained as an engineer but became increasingly involved in the art world with his work as art director for the British Board of Trade, and as a representative for the British government at a number of international art exhibits. He was also active on behalf of Russian Jews, and edited Darkest Russia from 1890-2. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Spielmann, Sir Isidore," by Hugo Bieber.

appropriate for the commemoration of Victoria's reign:

[The historical documents] record a remarkable progress in the position of the community....Her MAJESTY's reign has witnessed most of this advance, and it is appropriate that the records of it should be collected together in its Jubilee Year.⁴

The "progress" alluded to here included the material prosperity of the community as well as the admittance of professing Jews to English institutions. By 1887, a professing Jew could attend English universities, serve in governmental positions, and enter the Houses of Commons and of Lords. The Jewish Chronicle praises "the Victorian age as the most marvelous era in Anglo-Jewish annals," since "in [Victoria's] hands the sceptre became an enchanter's wand which swiftly altered the whole aspect of Anglo-Jewish affairs."⁵

Descriptions of the exhibition also functioned to continually remind the reader of the liberality and tolerance of English society towards Jews. At the Inaugural Soirée celebrating the exhibit's opening, Mr. Frederick David Mocatta⁶ welcomed "practically the whole official portion of

⁴"The Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition," The Jewish Chronicle, 1 April 1887, pp. 11-12.

⁵"The Queen's Jubilee," 11.

⁶David Frederick Mocatta (1828-1905) served as chairman of the exhibition and later as president of the Jewish Historical Society of England. He also published a well respected book on the Jews of Spain and the Inquisition. He was an important communal leader who held progressive views on improving the living conditions of the working classes. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Mocatta, Frederick David," by Hugo Bieber.

the Jewish community" and many "distinguished Christians" as the string band of the Royal artillery provided musical entertainment.⁷ An observer from The Jewish Chronicle noted that on entering Royal Albert Hall with its "vast dome," the visitor enjoyed "a feeling of freedom." The openness of Royal Albert Hall was paralleled to British institutions, which were in mark contrasted with those in Russia which allowed the ongoing persecution of Jews. In a lecture prepared especially for the exhibition, Heinrich Graetz noted that only England demonstrated the tolerance towards Jews that would permit so public an expression of Jewish cultural achievements.⁸

The Jewish Chronicle draws a similar parallel by linking the vast display of Jewish antiquities with the security of the community. Several articles from the fourteenth century were on display, including a Venetian ark studded with gems and a white satin curtain embroidered in silver for use at Yom Kippur.⁹ Various objects for the home such as Passover dishes and spice holders were also exhibited beside those for the synagogue. The most spectacular sight was a highly detailed model of Solomon's Temple constructed in "glittering brass" according to the descriptions found in the books of Kings and

⁷"The Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition," The Jewish Chronicle, 8 April 1887, supp., pp. 1-2.

⁸"Historic Parallels in Jewish History," The Jewish Chronicle, 24 June 1887, p. 18.

⁹These descriptions of the exhibitions are drawn from a series of articles published as supplements to The Jewish Chronicle, appearing in April 1887.

Ezekiel. After describing these antiquities, The Jewish Chronicle's observer noted "that an inauguration so prosperous could not be followed by any sinister shadows," so that Jewish integration into English society seemed complete.¹⁰

The Anglo-Jewish community actively pursued this integration by modeling itself after English society while also attempting to maintain its distinctiveness. English Jews are described as "hav[ing] participated in all the modifications of thought and feeling which have made the England of 1887 so different from 1837."¹¹ Over the last fifty years, The Jewish Chronicle observes, that "Anglo-Jewish history has taken the same character as that of English history in general."¹² Jewish communal institutions such as the Board of Guardians have "substitute[d] centralization for local government," paralleling changes in English institutions.¹³ With the expansion of the English empire, increasing numbers of Jews had become colonists, and similar to its English counterpart, the Jewish press had become an expression of public opinion. A visitor to the portrait gallery at the exhibition observes that even the appearance of Anglo-Jews has taken on an "English" quality:

¹⁰"The Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition," 8 April 1887, 1.

¹¹"A Contrast: 1837-1887," The Jewish Chronicle, 17 June 1887, p. 6.

¹²Ibid., 7.

¹³Ibid.

[The Goldsmid family has] taken a leading part in all that concerns English Judaism for a century past. Their faces are veritable types of English Jews, distinctly Jewish, yet characteristically English.¹⁴

This strong identification of the Jews with English manners and other social practices should have left little doubt that they were an "integral part of the nation" and no longer "aliens."

However, the article on the Victoria's Jubilee mentioned earlier in this discussion indicates a certain uneasiness with the attention given to Jewish distinctiveness, even though Victorian Jews were highly anglicized. The writer of this article seems to feel that any expression of "Jewish feeling" on this occasion must be qualified to show that it is also rooted in Englishness. This qualification is supposed to prevent the reader from concluding that "Jewish feeling" is somehow "foreign" or "alien":

If we pause to consider this happy occasion from the standpoint of Jewish feeling, it is not because we can admit for one moment that there is any possibility of separating the British Jew by a single hairbreadth from the rest of his fellow subjects in the general rejoicing.¹⁵

Similarly, The Jewish Chronicle points out that the Jews' attachment to the monarchy is no less than that of their "non-Jewish neighbours," but even though "there is absolutely no

¹⁴"The Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition," The Jewish Chronicle, 15 April 1887, supp., p. 4.

¹⁵"The Queen's Jubilee," 11.

need to affirm that," the paper continually does so.¹⁶ The Victorian Jew, no longer considered an "alien," has interests that are repeatedly demonstrated to be consonant with those of the English.

The uneasiness of the Jewish community with its new position as an "integral part of the nation" becomes even more palpable when the Jewish Historical Exhibition is considered in a broader context. Anglo-Jews are urged to attend, because "the outside world will look upon the success of the Exhibition as a test of the position of the Jews in the public esteem."¹⁷ However, there are some misgivings about the wisdom of 'testing the public esteem' that Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler feels compelled to dispel in a sermon given at the Bayswater Synagogue. He casually dismisses the concern over "our community...thrust[ing] itself upon the public notice" with the exhibition by highlighting its educational significance.¹⁸ The Jewish Chronicle's publication of articles on the exhibition alongside those recounting the protests against the admission of Eastern European Jews into England makes Adler's optimism look somewhat misguided. The agitation against the incoming "destitute aliens" is described as "taking a form wherein prejudice and exaggeration, unworthy

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷"The Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition," 1 April 1887, 12.

¹⁸"The Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition," The Jewish Chronicle, 22 April 1887, p. 9.

stereotypes, their very nature results in a neglect or oversimplification of the relationship between the historical context and the depiction of Jewish characters. A brief overview of these studies will help clarify the trends in literary approaches to representations of the Jew and also highlight the need for more historically specific analyses.

In Loathsome Jews and Engulfing Women, Andrea Loewenstein provides an important history of the representation of the Jew in English literature. Loewenstein explains that early twentieth-century critics tended to be concerned with stereotypes and proposing arguments to disprove them. The work of these critics "direct[s] the unsuspecting reader toward examples of anti-Semitism in the texts, thus performing the 'naming' function," so that anti-Semitic authors can be distinguished from philo-Semitic ones.²¹ For example, David Philipson's The Jew in English Fiction (1901) and Montagu Modder's The Jew in the Literature of England (1939) focus on distinguishing between negative stereotypes and positive representations of Jews. Modder further refines this process by developing a classification system that groups "Jewish types" such as the "wandering Jew," and the "Shylock type."²²

In addition to identifying literary conventions used in the characterization of Jews, these critics rely on biographical

²¹Andrea Freud Loewenstein, Loathsome Jews and Engulfing Women (New York: New York University, 1993), 45.

²²Ibid., 52.

details from the author's life to further temper their assessment of the works. Loewenstein observes "that an author's personal behavior and his or her own self-definition as a tolerant or prejudiced person were relevant information" to this group of critics.²³

These early studies are also pre-occupied with using the literary representations of the Jew to outline a scheme of historical progress that helps identify the role of the Jewish community in contemporary society. Philipson sees Jews as successfully assimilating into society, and his concern is with "Gentile authors" who have failed to provide representations of these more 'cultured' Jews.²⁴ He implies that negative stereotypes of Jews should disappear as they shed some of their distinctive cultural practices. Edward Calish must rely on the work of Jewish authors to bear out his "theory of rapid progress" in the social acceptance of Jews, since the works of Gentiles provide so little evidence to support it.²⁵ As Loewenstein points out, Modder's argument that "things are improving for the Jews" is rather ironic since his work was published at the onset of the Second World War.²⁶ Her study implies that the desire to link literary representation and historical progress which compelled these

²³Ibid., 76.

²⁴Ibid., 48.

²⁵Ibid., 50.

²⁶Ibid.

critics to identify anti-Semitism in English literature is influenced by a sense of moral responsibility and by a hope for increased tolerance. This practice also seems to differentiate the early critics from later ones, who are more concerned with understanding the psychology of anti-Semitism than with arguing for an inclusive society.

Recent critics have tended to take advantage of developments in literary theory to account for the recurrence of stereotypes and anti-Semitism in English literature. In From Shylock to Svengali (1960), Edgar Rosenberg not only classifies "Jewish types" as Modder did, but also argues that they are "archetypal" in nature. Loewenstein explains that these "types" are not necessarily part of a "chronological progression, but rather come out of a kind of archetypal vein into which each succeeding generation taps."²⁷ In addition, Rosenberg identifies flattering literary portraits of Jews as perpetuating "positive stereotypes" that are as unrealistic as negative ones. His argument suggests that sympathetic portraits of Jews should not be used unquestioningly by literary critics as indications of tolerance and social progress.

Loewenstein also highlights the increasing importance of psychoanalytic approaches in the study of the "mythic Jew." Critics such as Harold Fisch and Leslie Fiedler use psychoanalytic theory to account for the persistence of anti-

²⁷Ibid., 56.

Semitism in literature, thus shifting the focus of their studies from the Jewish character to the Gentile reader. Fisch's Dual Image (1971) argues that representations of the Jew, both good and bad, are "a projection of the basic and lasting Christian ambivalence toward the Jew as expressed in the Old and New Testaments."²⁸ He draws on the theory of Jungian archetypes to explain the persistence of these images as part of the "collective consciousness of modern man." Fiedler's large body of criticism is also characterized by a "psychoanalytical orientation." He focusses on the Jewish reader's response to these mythic images by noting that they may engender "self-hatred." He also locates the source of negative stereotypes in the mind of the Gentile reader, rather than in any aspect of Jewish behavior.²⁹ In this way, Fiedler's work represents a significant shift in the critical approach to this issue, since earlier critics often believed that negative stereotypes were linked to the behavior of unassimilated Jews.

One of the features that distinguishes more recent criticism from these earlier studies is an increased emphasis on the relationship between the literary representation of the Jew and its historical context. The previous generation of critics often used methodologies that exclusively focussed on the text in order to discover "unconscious revelations" such

²⁸Ibid., 58.

²⁹Ibid., 59-63.

as myths, archetypes, and psychological factors that fostered the persistence of anti-Semitism and stereotypes.³⁰ Loewenstein takes issue with this critical practice because it allows literature to transcend its historical moment, and she describes her own work as most strongly influenced by those critics "who viewed the representation of Jews within the larger context of the treatment of various groups of Others."³¹ Similarly, Bryan Cheyette argues that the pre-occupation with categorizing stereotypes of Jews has hindered the development of more productive modes of analysis. The Jewish character has been so frequently evaluated in terms of the stereotype that this has become the critical method of choice when analyzing literary anti-Semitism. This leads to a certain critical complacency so that "the privileged cultural realm of literature remains essentially unthreatened by the naturalized construction of an eternal mythic 'Jew.'"³² Divorced from politics and history, the literary representation of the Jew is isolated in the transcendent world of literature.

Cheyette is equally concerned about the need to develop critical practices that will effectively add to the study of the literary representation of the Jew. Not only has the

³⁰Ibid., 76.

³¹Ibid., 77.

³²Bryan Cheyette, Constructions of 'the Jew' in English Literature and Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 3.

preoccupation with stereotypes hindered this methodological development, but "the over-simple association of fictional constructions with mass murder" of the Holocaust has allowed discussions of literary anti-Semitism to be avoided.³³ This oversimplification has fostered the perception that "this supposedly genocidal 'strain'" is "ultimately 'external' to English literary production" and has allowed it to be dismissed as "'inexplicable.'"³⁴ Cheyette proposes an alternative terminology for discussions of literary anti-Semitism by using "semitic discourse" to indicate the highly racialized assumptions that underwrite literary representations of the Jew.³⁵ This term allows him to avoid the "inherent moralizing" that often accompanies the discussions of philo-Semitism or anti-Semitism as exhibited in an author's life and work. He also challenges traditional assumptions about "late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English Literature by placing a dominant racialized discourse at the heart of what constitutes the received definitions of literary 'culture.'" ³⁶ This placement of "semitic discourse" as a central focus for English literature allows Cheyette to explore how the racialized Jew must transcend the "Semitic" in order to participate in Western

³³Ibid., 2.

³⁴Ibid., 2-3.

³⁵Ibid., 8.

³⁶Ibid., 4.

culture. These critical assumptions provide a framework for Cheyette to study "the very slipperiness and indeterminacy of 'the Jew'--as constructed within a semitic discourse" that informs many canonical literary works.³⁷

Cheyette's adoption of the term "semitic discourse" is not only indicative of the need for critical methodologies to address literary representations of the Jew but also of the difficulties in assessing anti-Semitism in general. In his review of recent trends in Anglo-Jewish historiography, Todd Endelman observes that until the publication of studies like Cheyette's, little serious attention was given to anti-Semitism in England since it was often dismissed as "little more than a minor irritant."³⁸ Anglo-Jewish historians have tended to view "Jew-hatred [as] a marginal phenomenon, restricted to upper-class drawing rooms...literary stereotypes...and the lunatic political fringe."³⁹ This view has persisted because anti-Semitism in Britain has usually been compared with the blatant, and violent, Jew-hatred in nineteenth-century Germany and Central Europe. More recent Anglo-Jewish historians have questioned both the validity of this comparison and the consequent assumption that British anti-Semitism was innocuous "by insisting that there is a

³⁷Ibid., 11.

³⁸Todd M. Endelman, "English Jewish History," Modern Judaism 11 (1991): 98.

³⁹Ibid., 97-8.

political character to forms of anti-Semitism frequently dismissed as non-ideological and amorphous...."⁴⁰

However, Endelman is concerned that this new emphasis on anti-Semitism as a political force may obscure the practice of toleration towards Jews in nineteenth-century Britain. Recent historians "interpret this tradition of toleration in a new fashion" that challenges the accepted view that "the liberal political culture of England" was its source.⁴¹ They "[claim] that liberalism itself bred its own distinctive form of hostility to Jews," and accommodated them only "to the extent that they were able to discard or transcend their particularist habits and attitudes."⁴² Endelman takes issue with this position by arguing that acculturated Jews were not denied access to English society, and that the hostility towards the community did not cause large scale conversion or emigration. Furthermore, anti-Semitism never prevented the British government from funding specifically Jewish institutions such as the schools.

Although Endelman offers an alternative account for the persistence of British anti-Semitism, he also indicates the need for studies that focus on the development of Anglo-Jewish identity. He describes his own work as assigning the source of anti-Jewish feeling to cultural rather than political

⁴⁰Ibid., 99.

⁴¹Ibid., 100.

⁴²Ibid.

practices:

I concluded that the failure of anglicized families to perpetuate their Jewishness for more than a few generations was due in large part to the inability of English culture to tolerate diversity....This culture was ruthlessly genteel, monolithic, and exclusive and did not acknowledge alternative ways of being authentically English.⁴³

This account offers an alternative to those studies which argue that the "liberal creed" functioned to perpetuate anti-Semitism, but it also fails to recognize that cultural practices frequently have political resonance. In order to better characterize the development of Anglo-Jewish identity in the nineteenth century, it seems necessary to consider how these practices intersect and influence communal behavior. This line of investigation seems to offer the "more nuanced answer to the question of [anti-Semitism's] impact" on Victorian Jews, one that Endelman sees as missing from other historical studies.⁴⁴

My dissertation adds yet another dimension to this scholarship by assessing how literary representations of the Jew participate in the articulation of nineteenth-century Anglo-Jewish identity. In order to do so, I look closely at the historical specificity of Jewish responses to these representations. Previous studies have focussed on the Gentile writer and the literary conventions, or cultural assumptions, that inform his or her characterization of the

⁴³Ibid., 103.

⁴⁴Ibid., 102.

Jew. Little attention has been given to these immediate Jewish responses to such representations, nor have the social and political factors that may have influenced them been investigated. Rather than simply recount English society's vision of the Jew, this study focusses largely on canonical texts in order to consider how they intervene in the Jewish vision of English society. Social, political, and religious concerns often converge in discussions of the works considered here. Jewish writers found these works useful for reinforcing communal values, or for illustrating values or behavior that the community as a whole should adopt. These literary works are also used by Jewish writers to challenge those who see Englishness as incompatible with Jewishness, or who perpetuate misconceptions of Jews. To better understand these processes, it is necessary to consider the dynamic relationship between Jewish readers and literary texts as part of the cultural matrix of nineteenth-century England.

My critical approach to this topic draws on analytical techniques and methodological assumptions that may be broadly termed "historicist." This study of the literary representation of the Jew is premised on the assumption that a literary text is both a product of and a participant in a given culture, or in this case, historical period. This approach ignores the boundaries that have separated literary production from other cultural practices by insisting that a reciprocal relationship exists between the text and its

historical context. The reciprocity of this relationship has significant implications for critical interpretation, because it indicates that the "meaning" of the text is historically constructed. In my attempt to reconstruct the "meaning" of the literary text for nineteenth-century Jewish readers, I have drawn on a series of "cultural questions" posed by Stephen Greenblatt.⁴⁵ These questions, or areas of investigation, include paying close attention to the "kinds of behavior" that a literary work may "enforce," to the reasons that readers during a particular period find a work "compelling," and to the institutions that these works may challenge or support.⁴⁶ Such investigations move towards "a full cultural analysis" that "push[es] beyond the boundaries of the text, to establish links between the text and values, institutions, and practices elsewhere in the culture."⁴⁷ By recognizing this interplay between the literary text and other cultural practices, this study attempts to outline the role of literary representation in the fashioning of Anglo-Jewish identity.

While Greenblatt's work has provided valuable insights, this study attempts to avoid the critical problems associated with some new historicist readings. Carolyn Porter argues

⁴⁵Stephen Greenblatt, "Culture," in Critical Terms for Literary Study, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 226.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

that new historicism remains controversial "partly because this movement has generated forms of critical practice that continue to exhibit the force of a formalist legacy whose subtle denials of history--as the scene of heterogeneity, difference, and contradiction, at least--persist."⁴⁸ Briefly stated the "formalist legacy" manifests itself in the practice of structuring the reading of a text on a model of Foucauldian power relations that are typically identified in an opening anecdote. This model of power frequently takes on an essentialized or transcendent quality that produces a dehistoricized reading of the text as a site of subversion and containment. The literary text is denied the possibility of "occupy[ing] an oppositional cultural site at specific historical moments," since this essentialized power operates to contain such resistance.⁴⁹

Like Greenblatt's work, this study is characterized by the use of anecdotes, but there is a self-conscious effort here to historicize this material. The anecdote functions here to illustrate the convergence of social and political practices in the literary representation of the Jew, and in doing so, it helps to pose those "cultural questions" that are necessary to reconstruct the "meaning" of the literary text. Since the anecdote does not exclusively provide a model of

⁴⁸Carolyn Porter, "History and Literature: 'After the New Historicism,'" New Literary History 21 (1990): 253.

⁴⁹Ibid., 262.

power relations, the readings of the text can more easily historicize the use of power, and the resistance to containment. The purpose of this study is to examine the boundaries where resistance and containment--or dominant culture and subculture--meet in order to better understand how literary works participated in negotiations between "Jewishness" and "Englishness."

My critical approach also recognizes the relationship of the literary text to material existence and social realities. The literary text is not simply a passive reflection of a given society or set of social values, but rather functions in the ongoing construction of social realities and values. It does so because its representations are ideologically informed and in this way exert their influence on material existence as do other social practices. I draw here specifically on Louis Althusser's definition of ideology as "the imaginary relation of...individuals to the real relations in which they live."⁵⁰ As Mary Poovey explains, Althusser recognizes that ideologies exist not only as ideas, but "they are given concrete form in the practices and social institutions that govern people's social relations and that, in so doing, constitute both the experience of social relations and the nature of subjectivity."⁵¹ Literary production is a social practice

⁵⁰Louis Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 165.

⁵¹Mary Poovey, Uneven Developments (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 3.

that also gives "concrete form" to ideologies as it conveys representations of social relations to the reader. However, Poovey warns about the danger of an oversimplified conception of ideology as "internally organized, coherent, and complete" by noting that her study of Victorian middle-class ideology shows it to be "actually fissured by competing emphases and interests."⁵² My study will also show that literary representations of the Jew are equally characterized by the struggles of competing ideologies.

I rely on a close reading of the literary texts and other types of primary source material in order to better recover their meaning. Recovering the meaning of a text involves analyzing the social values and the context it has absorbed as well as establishing links between it and other institutions and cultural practices.⁵³ This close reading of both literary and primary source texts recognizes that they are constituted "as a related series of concretely determined semiotic events that embody and represent processes of social and historical experience."⁵⁴ While my analysis recognizes that the text absorbs social values, it also demonstrates that readers interpret "semiotic events" in specific historical contexts. The production of "meaning" cannot be divorced from

⁵²Ibid., 3.

⁵³Greenblatt, 227.

⁵⁴Jerome J. McGann, The Beauty of Inflections (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 10.

its context: "What [literary works] signify, how they signify, depends on the cultural field in which they are situated."⁵⁵ The cultural values that a text is able to perpetuate are at least partially dependent on the reader's interpretation of its "semiotic events." However, the production of meaning is not static but is an ongoing process requiring the text to be "reconstructed, reappraised, reassigned all the time through diverse institutions in specific contexts."⁵⁶ My strategy here involves a close reading of the texts along with an analysis of their connection to other cultural practices in order to better characterize this ongoing process, and its implications for the construction of Anglo-Jewish identity.

Literary biography also helps to clarify the relationship of the text to other cultural practices as well as to the production of meaning. This analytical technique has been subject to criticism, because it is seen as limiting the interpretation of the literary text by narrowly focussing on the author's life or psychology:

If interpretation limits itself to the behavior of the author, it becomes literary biography (in either a conventionally historical or psychoanalytic mode) and risks losing a sense of the larger networks of meaning in which both the author and his works participate.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Jonathan Dolimore, and Alan Sinfield, eds., Political Shakespeare, 2d ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), viii.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Stephen Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 4.

My use of literary biography is an attempt to recover "the larger networks of meaning" that form a context for both narratives about the author's life, and the interpretation of his or her works. Like Jerome McGann, I argue that details of the author's life in "public circulation" modify "the developing history of the poem," or literary work.⁵⁸ This study demonstrates that biographical accounts of the author's life appearing in nineteenth-century periodicals or newspapers are shaped by larger social and political concerns. These biographical accounts are frequently used to justify one interpretation of the text over another. Consequently, neither the private life of the author nor the interpretation of the text remains isolated from "larger networks of meaning," and their social and political implications.

Finally, the theoretical assumptions that I make about the construction of historical narratives also forms an integral part of my methodology. The particular historical context in which I situate the literary text is not a single, monolithic account of Anglo-Jewish history, but one of many possible narratives that can be constructed. This assumption accounts for the difference between my methodology and more traditional approaches to literary history. Louis Montrose describes the latter as attempting to historicize canonical works in terms of the "spirit of the age":

the historical critic [celebrated dominant ideology] as

⁵⁸McGann, 24.

being the morally, intellectually, and aesthetically satisfying structure of understanding and belief, the stable and coherent world picture, that is shared by all members of the social body.⁵⁹

This positivistic approach sought to use history not only as background for literary interpretation but also as evidence for its correctness or accuracy. Since I view the historical context as a system of cultural networks, my study has been able to assess the literary work's relationship to its historical moment in ways that the use of a pre-determined vision of the nineteenth century might obscure. For example, my study reveals how literary works participated in ideological struggles over the Jewish Question that are characterized by a desire for social progress as well as subtle prejudices.

However, my reconstruction of the historical context for this study does not escape being both interested and partial. As Montrose points out, knowledge about the past is generally conveyed through written documents that both limit the kinds of available knowledge and require the critic to act as an interpreter. Since acts of interpretation cannot help but be influenced by the critic's perspective, it is impossible to construct an objective history that can validate a specific reading of a literary text:

Similarly, it is no longer possible to believe that an objective realm of history can serve to measure the

⁵⁹Louis Montrose, "New Historicisms," in Redrawing Boundaries, ed. Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1992), 397.

correctness of the interpretation of literary texts, since history is itself as much the product of interpretive practices as are the literary interpretations it is being used to check.⁶⁰

It is also necessary to recognize that no account of a historical period or culture can be all inclusive. The "readings of cultural texts cannot but be partial," since it would be impossible to produce an "exhaustive description" of how the text is situated in the multifaceted network of cultural practices.⁶¹ Any effort to limit or carefully define the context undercuts the attempt to identify literature as intimately connected to other aspects of culture.

I recognize these methodological limitations by consciously drawing attention to the complexity of the historical context, and by highlighting the ideological assumptions that underwrite both the literary works and the interpretations of them made by their Jewish readers. This effort traces the complex intersection of Jewish communal interests, Christian theological debates, and the political struggles within English institutions. This context is further complicated by such diverse issues as English colonialism, the rise of secularism, and the questions of class hierarchy.

⁶⁰Lee Patterson, "Literary History," in Critical Terms for Literary Study, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 259.

⁶¹Montrose, 396-7.

While I have attempted to use a variety of primary source materials to contextualize the literary works, most of the public discussions about the relationship between "Jewishness" and "Englishness" tend to be carried on by upper- and middle-class Jewish males.⁶² They are generally well-educated, and are "native" Jews as opposed to recent immigrants. Several are journalists, religious leaders, or scholars who not only had the education necessary to produce periodical articles, but who also had access to the press. They are either communal leaders or have held some type of leadership role in Jewish clubs or other organizations. It is also not uncommon to find them in positions of power or prestige outside the immediate confines of the community. Their comments are characterized by similar concerns about the stability and future of the Jewish community, and institutions. They also have a vested interest in balancing their "Jewishness" with some version of "Englishness," and their multifaceted experiences provide them with diverse opinions as to how this should be accomplished. By refusing to artificially separate "English" and "Jewish" preoccupations, this approach to the

⁶²This study alludes to concerns about Jewish women and the Jewish poor, but it does not provide an extensive discussion about how literary representations may have participated in their conception of Anglo-Jewish identity. The most readily available source materials such as popular nineteenth-century periodicals and The Jewish Chronicle provided only limited information about the reception of literary works by these groups. The novels of Jewish women and the Yiddish and Hebrew newspapers of the immigrant poor may yield a great deal of information about their interests that was unavailable for this study.

texts is a significant departure from previous studies, because it highlights the mediating role that literary representations of the Jew play in the formation of Anglo-Jewish identity.

The following chapters clarify the mediating role of literary representations by stressing the significance of both literary history and biographical criticism in heightening the awareness of the cultural function of literature. They also demonstrate how the literary representation of the Jew participated in the fashioning of an Anglo-Jewish identity. Jews did not consider the key to this identity as simply residing in the extension of legal rights. As they outline their dual responsibilities as Jews and Englishmen, they also take into consideration such issues as the adoption of English manners, the moral influence of Judaism on Victorian society, and the assessment of their community by the general public. These seemingly "social" or "religious" issues often become the focal points of Jewish leaders, because they are perceived as having political implications for the community. Similarly, literary representations of Jews also prompt responses by Jewish readers because they convey images of social relations that impact on the fashioning of Anglo-Jewish identity.

Furthermore, the literary works of Disraeli, Arnold, and Eliot are included here because they present multifaceted accounts of Jewish participation in English society, Western

culture, and religious history that prompts complex and revealing responses of Jewish readers. Many nineteenth-century novels and prose works include Jewish characters or discuss issues relevant to the community. Both Charles Dickens and Anthony Trollope include several Jewish characters in their novels. However, they present such stereotypic and disturbing portraits of Jews that their novels only prompt disapproval, and little or no reflection on Jewish life in England. The literary works of Disraeli, Arnold, and Eliot share with these novelists many of the same stereotypic assumptions about Jews, but they also espouse visions of Jewish history and the community that are often consonant with those of communal leaders. Jewish readers seem to be attentive to these works because their authors are in positions of institutional power or have highly esteemed reputations. This makes their "positive" valuations of Jewish history or religion all the more noteworthy, since they often provide useful arguments in defence of the community. Consequently, it is not surprising to find allusions to Disraeli, Arnold, or Eliot in discussions about the Jewish influence on Victorian culture or morality.

The opening chapters of the dissertation focus on Benjamin Disraeli and the Jewish bid for emancipation. Although baptized in the Church of England and a long time member of Parliament, Disraeli's Jewishness always remained part of his public identity. In Chapter Two, I consider how

the biographical details of Disraeli's life reveal multiple sites of contestation between "Englishness" and "Jewishness" that characterize the history of the Anglo-Jewish community as a whole. Described as neither an apostate nor a Jew, Disraeli's ability to participate in English political institutions but at the same time, continue to be identified with the community provides unique insights into the problems of negotiating "Englishness" and "Jewishness."

Chapters Three and Four consider how Disraeli's novels explore questions of national identity and Jewish distinctiveness prompted by debates over disabilities. Chapter Three argues that The Wondrous Tale of Alroy is the novel of Jewish emancipation because of its depiction of Jewish religious beliefs as a moral basis and source of inspiration for political movements. It also focusses on the struggles that emerge as religious duties and more secular, political responsibilities are brought into conflict. Though generally neglected by critics, the novel is an early exploration of tensions that characterize Anglo-Jewish identity. Chapter Four demonstrates how Disraeli further complicates his views of Jewish emancipation by associating it with the need to reconfigure the conception of English nationhood. This analysis argues that Tancred articulates the problems inherent in governing and uniting an ethnically and religiously diverse society. The underlying tension between conformity and toleration is threaded throughout the novel,

and prevents it from depicting a simple resolution to the political and religious questions that confront the young English lord, Tancred. The Jewish characters function to continually challenge the concept of religious conformity by exemplifying the social problems that it can cause. Thus, Tancred reveals both the moral and political challenge to England posed by the toleration of Anglo-Jews.

Much of the controversy prompted by the emancipation movement gives way with the first professing Jew, Lionel Rothschild, taking his parliamentary seat in 1858. However, the governmental and institutional recognition of Jewish rights did not put an end to the community's vigilant guard of its good standing in English society. It is in conjunction with this effort of the Jewish community that Matthew Arnold develops his reputation as "friend to Judaism." While his inspectorship is frequently mentioned in biographical studies, little has been said about the significance of his work in conjunction with Jewish schools. Chapter Five describes how Arnold's positive assessments of Jewish education were highly esteemed by communal leaders, and indirectly, influenced his literary reputations among this group. It explains how these schools functioned to inculcate students with Jewish religious values and English patriotism. As school inspector, Arnold participated in this process of anglicization that attempted to further the identification of Jews with England. His positive assessment of the schools indirectly fostered this

identification, and forms an important context for the assessment of his literary works.

Jewish responses to Arnold's Culture and Anarchy are the focal point of Chapter Six. This study argues that Arnold's conception of Hebraism as a cultural force in English society is advanced at a time when Jews were debating how their three names (Hebrew, Jew, and Israelite) represent their multiple roles in post-emancipation society. Although his term continues to perpetuate certain Jewish stereotypes, references to Hebraism are frequently made by Jews as they construct an Anglo-Jewish identity. This chapter argues that the "assimilative" or "universal" quality of Arnold's theory of culture, which includes the Hebraic, is used as evidence for Jewish compatibility with, and moral contributions to, Victorian institutions. In this way, Jewish communal leaders use it to demonstrate how Jewish history and religion are not "alien" to English culture but constitutive of it.

The next chapter, "Hellenism versus Hebraism: A Struggle for Cultural Dominance," further highlights the significance of Hebraism as an indicator of Jewish rootedness in England, but it also discusses how Hellenism increasingly provided a challenge to it. Proponents of the classics sometimes attempted to use them to displace the Hebraic from its pivotal role in religious history, so that the Jew was excluded from participating ongoing development of Western culture. Consequently, certain Anglo-Jewish intellectuals came to

advocate the assimilation of Hellenic qualities as necessary for Jewish survival in post-emancipation society. In this chapter, I argue that Arnold's Culture and Anarchy provides an useful model for a Jewish approach to the integration of the Hellenic and the Hebraic. The debates over the relative influence of the two forces, or the relative merit of the classics and religion, are not simply intellectual exercises, but become interwoven with the social and political status of the emancipated Jew.

Chapter Eight discusses Arnold's religious prose and its relationship to Judaism as an entity separate from the Hebraic ideal. It considers the mutual theological concerns of the Christian and the Jew by analyzing religious controversies and their political implications for Jews and Judaism. Like Christian religious leaders, Jews were also concerned about Higher Criticism's valuation of the Bible, increased secularism, and religious indifference. This chapter argues that Arnold's ideas of "right reading" as well as his narratives of biblical history participate in debates over Christianity, which in turn also influence the construction of an Anglo-Jewish identity and the conceptualization of Judaism's mission in nineteenth-century England. Arnold's assessment of Israel's mission--however limited he concludes it to be--as well as his valuation of Hebraism participate in Jewish debates over Judaism's ability to inspire a renewed sense of religiosity in Victorians who have seen Christianity

discredited because of its reliance on miracles.

This spiritual mission of Judaism was premised on the continued growth of social and religious toleration that was to foster the integration of Jews and their religion into Victorian life. However, the repeated publication of unflattering caricatures in the press focussed attention on the "foreignness" of Jews and revealed the persistence of latent anti-Semitism. George Eliot's publication of Daniel Deronda (1876) made her a compelling example of progress towards the toleration of Jews in the nineteenth century. Chapter Nine will briefly consider how biographical narratives constructed about the development of Eliot's attitudes towards the Jews were used to demonstrate the growth of this toleration. It will also analyze how such critical practices tended to obscure the contingent nature of toleration towards Anglo-Jews that characterized both the novel and Victorian society at large.

Chapter Ten outlines the ways that Eliot's novel provided the community with an useful argument for the spirituality of Judaism. This study focusses on the critical debate over the possibility that an actual historical figure like Eliot's fictional Mordecai could be found among the Jews. This critical debate over the source and possible historical reality of Mordecai's character also functioned as an argument over the "spiritual" fitness of Judaism for nineteenth-century society. This chapter shows how the behavior of Mordecai and

the novel's other Jewish characters was used to reinforce communal values that the reviewers saw as necessary for Jews to maintain their religious and ethnic identity as they participated in post-emancipation society. The novel not only argues for Jewish spirituality but was used by certain reviewers to provide didactic lessons on Jewish behavior.

However, the enthusiasm of Jewish reviewers for Eliot's depiction of spiritual values seems tempered by an uneasiness with certain "Zionist" aspects of the novel. Eliot's presentation of the Jews in London was not only for the purpose of educating the English reading public, but also for the political purpose of proposing the founding of a Jewish state that would further nurture the spirituality of Judaism and provide legal solutions for injustices experienced by Jews. In this way, her novel perpetuates the practice of singling out Jews as "aliens" who will leave England for their future "homeland." The "Zionist" vision propounded in the novel only worked to further complicate the conception of Jews as English citizens by undermining public perceptions of their loyalty and ties to England. Chapter Eleven argues that Daniel Deronda continually fails to articulate an "Anglo-Jewish" identity for its characters, and in this way, it suggests that the professing Jew can never fully assume the role of English citizen. It also traces the attempts of Jewish reviewers to minimize this aspect of the novel by downplaying the "political" tendencies of Judaism, and by

further emphasizing its spirituality. This chapter indicates that, while Jews made use of literary representations in the construction of an Anglo-Jewish identity, they were often forced to qualify or ignore problematic aspects of them.

This preliminary summary is meant to suggest that literary representations order social realities in ideologically mediated ways. A cursory reading of the texts discussed here would uncover a number of problematic and even anti-Semitic, assessments of Anglo-Jews. An ahistorical analysis would also ignore the complex responses of Anglo-Jews to these literary works as well as the assumptions about Jewish identity that they are used to convey. By reconstructing the historical context, this study will contribute to a better understanding of the problems surrounding Jewish integration into English society. It is through this process that the mediating role of literary representation in Victorian society can also be better understood.

CHAPTER II

BENJAMIN DISRAELI AND THE ANGLO-JEWISH COMMUNITY:

"NEITHER AN APOSTATE NOR A JEW"

Benjamin Disraeli's successful bid for premiership in 1868 prompted The Jewish Chronicle to comment not only on his Jewish origins, but also on Victorian attitudes towards Anglo-Jews. In "The New Premier," the paper strategically links Disraeli's political victory to the English sense of fair play:

Englishmen applaud the man who wins in a fair fight by sheer courage and talent--the man who gains a prize, not by family, fortune, nor favor, but simply because he deserves it.¹

This allusion to the English respect for "a fair fight" contextualizes the discussion of what some Victorian readers might have considered a less palatable topic, the genius of the Jewish race. Disraeli's political success is repeatedly attributed to and used to exemplify this racial genius. The article concludes by informing the reader that the real purpose of acknowledging Disraeli's premiership has been to vindicate the Jews from "debasing and degrading associations":

To show the injustice of such aspersions, to place the truth before the world, to seize every instance to

¹"The New Premier," The Jewish Chronicle, 6 March 1868, p. 4.

support that truth...such are the motives that actuate our allusion to the appointment of the new Premier.²

In this way, the paper seemingly maintains its neutrality by emphasizing that it has been motivated only by a desire for justice, and remains "uninfluenced by political considerations."

The account of Disraeli's political success by The Jewish Chronicle illustrates how his "Jewishness" intimately associates him with larger communal concerns. The rhetorical strategy of linking the English sense of fair play with Disraeli's premiership works to foster the idea that Jewishness need not be a hindrance to political advancement. By identifying this sense of fair play as distinctly English, the writer implies that the "aspersions" cast on the Jewish race are contrary to England's national temperament. The narrative of Disraeli's advancement in politics functions as a didactic lesson on how all Jews should be treated in England. Merit, rather than race, family, or fortune should determine an individual's fate. "The New Premier" also demonstrates how descriptions of Disraeli's "Jewishness" are at least partially influenced by their ability to further communal interests. The description of Disraeli as "neither an apostate nor a Jew," but "as born of Hebrew parents," allows him to be identified with Anglo-Jews to a certain

²Ibid., 5.

degree.³ Consequently, an assessment of Disraeli's "Jewish identity" needs to take into consideration the ways in which it was conditioned by the historically specific concerns of nineteenth-century Anglo-Jews.

This biographical overview of Disraeli's life is constructed on the premise that though no longer a professing Jew nor an active member of the Anglo-Jewish community, he continued to remain a participant in the dominant culture's negotiation of Englishness and Jewishness. Remarks by political opponents about Disraeli's "Jewishness" were frequently extended to the Jewish community as a whole. Disraeli's novels and certain political speeches only furthered his identification with Anglo-Jews in the public eye. In a review of Tancred, one critic rebukes Disraeli for his theories of Jewish racial superiority while also suggesting that "the foremost Hebrews of Europe" were "perhaps in secret not a little proud of their advocate."⁴ While non-Jews may have alluded to Disraeli in order to discredit the community, Jewish descriptions of his life were highly nuanced accounts that either suppress or highlight information according to the immediate communal needs. This biographical overview will not only discuss aspects of Disraeli's public profession of Jewishness that obtruded on the community, but

³Ibid., 4.

⁴[Robert Monckton Milnes], "The Emancipation of the Jews," review of Tancred, by Benjamin Disraeli, The Edinburgh Review 86 (July-October 1847): 144.

also the preoccupations of Anglo-Jews as they continually negotiated an Anglo-Jewish identity.

Victorian attitudes towards race form an important context for this analysis of Disraeli's relationship to the Anglo-Jewish community. Raymond Williams aptly describes how the idea of race derived "from the old senses of 'blood' or 'stock'" had "been widely extended from traceable specific offspring to much wider social, cultural, and national groups."⁵ During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the study of race was characterized by the interest in comparative philology that sought to identify the relationship between racial groups by studying linguistic structures. This philological approach to race slowly gave way to one that emphasized biological determinism. The latter initially resulted in "a confusion of physical and cultural characteristics."⁶ In fact, cultural practices were described as "'racial' tendencies" because of the widespread "belief that the habitual behavior of human groups in different environments might become part of their hereditary physical makeup."⁷ A[ndrew] M[artin] Fairbairn describes such a process in "Race and Religion" (1873):

The law of hereditary reigns in the race as in the

⁵Raymond Williams, Keywords, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 249.

⁶George W. Stocking, Victorian Anthropology (New York: Free Press, 1987), 63.

⁷Ibid., 64.

family, and distinctive genius is as natural in the one as in the other. Inherited capacities which spring from a common descent, collective tendencies which flow from kindred natures formed under the same institutions, and existing under similar physical and geographical conditions, give to a homogeneous people a species of colossal individuality.⁸

Fairbairn demonstrates how cultural practices, including responses to the physical environment, have been given the status of biologically inheritable characteristics, so that they function to identify racial origins. He goes so far as to argue that even religious beliefs and practices can be used to distinguish "savage from civilized races."⁹ In the nineteenth century, racial identity of the Anglo-Jews was equally defined by assumptions about culture, religion, and political institutions as well as biology.

Furthermore, nineteenth-century attitudes towards Jews as a distinctive racial group were further complicated by their claim to be a religious minority. The proponents of Jewish emancipation identified Anglo-Jews as both Englishmen and as a religious minority, so that their political position paralleled that of other Nonconformist groups. At the same time, David Feldman points out that "Jews were identified, and identified themselves as something more than a religious minority," and that "race" was sometimes used to designate

⁸A[ndrew] M[artin] Fairbairn, "Race and Religion," The Contemporary Review 22 (October 1873): 783.

⁹Ibid., 782.

this characteristic of the community.¹⁰ This dual identification was the "cause of ambiguity" about the relationship between the Jew and post-emancipation English society. When Jews failed to abandon their distinctiveness, their "unassimilability" was "understood in two ways: one pursued the opposition of Judaism to Christianity, the other focussed on the operation of race."¹¹ Jews themselves made use of this racial discourse to defend Judaism from claims that it was a religion of race, and to "legitimise Jewish traits--characteristic attitudes and patterns of behavior--and to imply their origins were, at least in part, biological."¹² Thus, "the connection of race was understood to be 'natural' and 'simply the expression of kinship and family attachment.'" ¹³ The following chapters will demonstrate how advances in science, the Higher Criticism, and even English colonialism would continue to influence ideas of race and in turn define Jewish racial identity throughout the century.

Given these complex assumptions about race, Disraeli is a perplexing figure to study in regards to either his sense of "Jewishness" or his attitudes towards Judaism. His tendency to publicly flaunt his Jewish ancestry and his sweeping claims

¹⁰This brief overview of the racial identity of nineteenth-century Jews is based on David Feldman, Englishmen and Jews (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 77-8.

¹¹Ibid., 112.

¹²Ibid., 126.

¹³Ibid., 122.

about the racial superiority of the Jews have fostered numerous critical studies that attempt to account for his behavior. Political expediency has long been considered one of the reasons for his public recognition of his Jewish ancestry. One nineteenth-century reviewer observes that by admitting his Jewish ancestry, Disraeli "[had] taken at least one weapon of prejudice out of the hands of his opponents."¹⁴ Twentieth-century critics further complicate this perspective by suggesting that psychological motivations as well as political ones underwrite Disraeli's sense of racial superiority. Abraham Gilam observes that once Disraeli's political career had advanced, he recognized that he could no longer behind his image as a dandy in order to protect himself from anti-Semitic attacks. Instead, he choose to openly acknowledge his Jewish background and to adopt an "attitude that would secure some immunity from intimidation on that account."¹⁵ In his biographical study, Cecil Roth points out that Disraeli's claims about the superiority of his racial heritage could be viewed as an attempt to construct a lineage comparable to aristocratic members of his party, thus furthering his acceptance by this group.¹⁶

While reviewing previous studies of Disraeli's "Jewish

¹⁴[Robert Monckton Milnes], 143.

¹⁵Abraham Gilam, "Disraeli in Jewish Historiography," Midstream 26 (1980): 28.

¹⁶Cecil Roth, Benjamin Disraeli (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952), 60.

identity," Todd Endelman offers an alternative interpretation that suggests his attitudes towards Jews and Judaism are much more hostile than generally recognized. He attributes the persistence of Disraeli's "Jewish" reputation to the enthusiasm of Jewish apologists while concluding that "[Disraeli's] feelings of kinship with the Jewish people...did not bring him any closer to the Jewish community of his age," and that he was contented to remain a Christian.¹⁷ Endelman's argument is particularly valuable here because it points to a series of questions about Disraeli's relationship to nineteenth-century Jews that this study will address. It suggests the need to clarify the ways in which Disraeli's criticism of traditional Judaism parallels or diverges from Anglo-Jewish views of religious practice. Since Disraeli's pronouncements about Jews were usually public ones, it seems necessary to ask how his novels and speeches may have participated in debates over Anglo-Jewish participation in both pre- and post-emancipation society. Endelman's article also raises questions about pressures felt by nineteenth-century Jewish apologists as they work to construct narratives that account for Disraeli's "Jewish identity."

Perhaps the most obvious place to begin this discussion is by examining the various accounts of Disraeli's baptism in the Church of England. His baptism is considered the result

¹⁷Todd M. Endelman, "Disraeli's Jewishness Reconsidered," Modern Judaism 5 (1985): 121.

of a disagreement that Isaac D'Israeli had with the elders of his synagogue.¹⁸ In 1813, Isaac was elected warden of the Congregation of Bevis Marks, but he refused to take the office and to pay the ensuing fine for rejecting it.¹⁹ Correspondence between the elders and Isaac indicates that the issue could not be resolved so the D'Israeli family broke off its formal ties to the synagogue. A friend urged Isaac to have his children baptized, because it seemed unreasonable for them to suffer from Jewish disabilities when they no longer practiced Judaism. On July 11, 1817, the two youngest boys were baptized at St. Andrew's Holburn, but Benjamin did not receive the sacrament until July 31, and his sister Sarah was not baptized until August 28. Cecil Roth has speculated that young Disraeli may have been reluctant to abandon his religion, but there is little evidence to give validity to this claim.²⁰

Disraeli's membership in the Church of England makes him a questionable example of "Jewish genius" when considered in light of Anglo-Jewish attitudes towards converts. In the

¹⁸The family name was originally Israeli, but Isaac's father changed the spelling to "D'Israeli," and later Benjamin altered it to "Disraeli." Endelman, "Disraeli's Jewishness Reconsidered," 110.

¹⁹The background for this discussion is taken from Robert Blake, Disraeli (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966), 10-11.

²⁰Blake also refers to Roth's theory in his biography, but he points out that Disraeli never acknowledges any reluctance about being baptized. Cecil Roth, Benjamin Disraeli (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952), 21-3.

nineteenth century, Jewish converts were looked upon as opportunists who were motivated by a desire for personal gain, social advancement, and material prosperity. The Jewish Chronicle summarizes this view while casting suspicion on the characters of such Jews:

In any case, careers are opened to him which, before his conversion, were shut against him if not by the law...[then] by social prejudice. A Jew therefore can hardly believe in the disinterestedness of conversion bringing in its trains so many advantages....²¹

Disraeli's political success only seems to confirm this view, since his conversion made it possible for him to take his parliamentary seat after being elected to his first term of office in 1837. He had been a member of Parliament for almost two decades before professing Jews were allowed to hold the office. In 1876, James Picciotto commented that had the disagreement between his father and the synagogue ended differently: "Benjamin D'Israeli might in that case have been a brilliant man of letters...a rising member of Parliament. In all human probability he would not, whilst we write, be guiding the destinies of England."²²

As both the century and Disraeli's political career advanced, Anglo-Jewish accounts of his baptism unabashedly relieve him of the stigmas associated with conversion. Disraeli may not be a "Jew" but neither is he considered an

²¹"Mr. Disraeli and the Jews," The Jewish Chronicle, 14 January 1876, p. 667.

²²James Picciotto, Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History (London: Trübner, 1875), 301.

"apostate." One method used to avoid the inconsistency of putting forth the "Christian" Disraeli as an example of "Jewish genius" was to characterize him as a "victim" in the process of conversion. Since he was baptized as a child, he was not considered a willing participant in this act of apostasy, but rather a blameless victim of circumstance. The author of "The New Premier" explains that "circumstances of his life, wholly beyond his own control, separated him at an early age from [the Jewish] communion of faith...."²³ In this way, Disraeli is not "a mere venal and vulgar apostate," so that the author feels comfortable discussing his Jewish origins:

But because his entrance into an alien communion was an involuntary act on his part...and it in no wise affected his moral character....we cannot regard the circumstance as in any fashion influencing the propriety of adverting on the career of Disraeli, as bearing fresh testimony to the genius of the Jewish race.²⁴

A reviewer of Alroy expresses similar feelings about Disraeli when he notes that he has been ostracized by many Anglo-Jews: "Jews have scoffed at him as a renegade to a religion from which he was estranged when he was too young to have a will or an opinion of his own."²⁵ It seems the first step in the process of reclaiming Disraeli is to establish his

²³"The New Premier," 4.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵"Editorial Essays," review of The Wondrous Tale of Alroy, by Benjamin Disraeli, The Jewish Chronicle, 11 August 1871, p. 10.

blamelessness, and his baptism as a child provides a means to demonstrate his lack of complicity in his conversion.

Disraeli's experience as the child-victim also allows him to be used as an example of the damage caused by parents who neglect their children's Jewish education. "The New Premier" explicitly blames Isaac for the conversion, noting that while the child was initially circumcised, "his father, thinking it fit to quarrel with the synagogue, failed to teach his child Judaism."²⁶ While he takes a far more encompassing view of the conversions, Nathan Meyer emphasizes that it is parental neglect rather than religious conviction which contributes to the abandonment of Judaism:

I am firmly convinced that...[no] Jews of distinguished ability were ever won over to Christianity by simply 'applying themselves to the study of its evidences.' The better class of converts have generally been obtained in youth, as in the case of Disraeli, through their parents lapsing into skepticism and indifference and neglecting their religious education.²⁷

Disraeli's conversion is seen here as indicative of a disquieting trend in communal behavior, rather than a personal failing on his part. Meyer dismisses the arguments of Christian missionaries to the Jews by noting the lack of conviction among converts. In doing so, he not only draws attention to the questionable "evidence" of Christianity, but he also implies that it is not a moral or religious defect in

²⁶"The New Premier," 4.

²⁷Nathan Meyer, "Judaism and Christianity," The Jewish Chronicle, 31 March 1871, p. 7.

Judaism which fosters its abandonment. Christianity itself does not attract "the better class of converts," but parental failure to instill a sense of Jewishness and to teach religious practice is responsible for the attrition of Jews like Disraeli.

Picciotto supplies yet another version of Disraeli's apostasy by blaming Jewish communal leaders for his father's break with the synagogue. His account of this dispute implies the need for Jewish institutions to adopt practices that are more consonant with those of English society. This reform is not simply a question of modernization, but a necessity if Anglo-Jews are to be prevented from abandoning their faith. Though the D'Israeli family had never been particularly religious, its members always made financial contributions to the synagogue, and had conscientiously had the boys "initiated in the covenant of Abraham."²⁸ Isaac was critical of certain ritual practices and advocated religious reform in his letters to the synagogue elders. He felt that his views on these issues would make it inappropriate for him to assume the role of warden. Picciotto explains that Isaac simply preferred to maintain his current association with the synagogue: "Mr. D'Israeli...did not write as if he were a strict orthodox Jew: but he showed a strong feeling for his race and desire to remain connected with the Jewish body, provided that such a connection could be continued in a manner in accordance with

²⁸Picciotto, 296.

his views."²⁹ He emphasizes the point that "[Isaac] had no desire to quit Judaism for Christianity," but neither did he embrace his religion wholeheartedly.³⁰ Picciotto's comments parallel those of Meyer, since he also indicates that the motivation for the conversion of the Disraeli children was not religious conviction but in this case, Isaac's desire to practice Judaism in "accordance with his views."

Picciotto faults the synagogue elders for their reluctance to allow for a certain amount of flexibility in religious belief. While Isaac was certainly no proponent of orthodoxy, the elders were equally unwilling to compromise:

It must at the same time be admitted that the authorities of the ancient Portuguese Congregation, and for that matter the authorities of other Jewish Congregations too, did nothing to keep their brethren who had any tendency to waver from their old creed.³¹

Picciotto reflects that at the beginning of the century, some degree of reform was necessary to bring Jewish ritual in line with English cultural practices. He criticizes the "rigidity" of "certain congregational laws," and "the indecorous, slovenly, and unattractive manner" of the synagogue services held in the early nineteenth century. The failure to address these criticisms and to tolerate more diverse views implies that synagogue authorities indirectly contributed to the abandonment of Judaism by some members of the congregation.

²⁹Ibid., 298.

³⁰Ibid., 299.

³¹Ibid., 299.

The rift between the D'Israeli family and the synagogue simply exemplifies "a connection that might never have been severed, had the authorities...displayed more judgement and tact in their dealings with Isaac D'Israeli."³² Picciotto provides not only a history of Disraeli's conversion, but also a commentary on the response of Jewish authorities to the pressures of modernity and the anglicization of their congregations.

Since Disraeli no longer had religious ties to Judaism, those Jews who wanted to identify him with the community found their only recourse was to emphasize the common racial background. The desire to demonstrate this commonality seems to be a function of many factors including Disraeli's political success, the increased popularity of racial theories in general, and the self-consciousness of the Anglo-Jewish community. In 1868, The Jewish Chronicle reminds its readers that even though the new premier does not practice Judaism, it is "the [Jewish] race from which [Disraeli] springs, the race to which in effect he belongs."³³ Two years later in a review of Lothair (1870), Disraeli's expression of racial pride not only identifies him with the Jewish community, but acts to confirm the nobility of the race:

Doubtlessly, Disraeli's attention was called to the topic by the circumstance that he himself belonged to an old Semitic family...and it is not unnatural that he...should

³²Ibid., 300.

³³"The New Premier," 4.

be disposed to urge the superior claims of the purer and older race...over those of the more modern and blended race....For the Jew was a member of a civilized nation...when the Anglo-Saxon was a savage in his wild forests....³⁴

This racial pride takes on a moral component of sorts because Jews have played such a significant role in religious history: "And there is something in the pride of race not altogether to be despised. Especially when that race was the cradle of the holiest influences...."³⁵ Disraeli's connection to the Jewish community is maintained by racial identification so that his political advances can be continually viewed as an example of "Jewish genius." This shared racial background allows Disraeli to be identified with the Jewish community while at the same time, avoiding any overt association with the stigmas attached to the "vulgar" convert.

The complex Jewish views of the convert function along with the increased emphasis on racial affinities and a certain Christian distrust of Jewish proselytes to continually cast doubt on the sincerity of Disraeli's religious convictions. Endelman points out that Disraeli was a conscientious member of the Church of England who regularly attended services.³⁶ By the 1860s, he had taken on the role as defender of the Established Church, even publishing an edition of his speeches

³⁴"Editorial Essays," review of Lothair, by Benjamin Disraeli, The Jewish Chronicle, 22 July 1870, p. 12.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Endelman, "Disraeli's Jewishness Reconsidered," 115.

in its defence. However, his beliefs remained suspect as The Illustrated London News implies when it gives special attention to Disraeli's Jewish origins in its account of Lionel Rothschild's admission to Parliament in 1858:

The faint tinge of colour that came over the pallid cheek of Mr. Disraeli as he grasped the hand of the first Judaic member of Parliament, and the momentary gleam of his eye, indicated a sense of this triumph of race; and perhaps at that moment there may have been a deeper feeling still in his heart--one of regret that he was not leading the House of Commons without having been compelled to utter those hitherto cabalistic words, "on the true faith of a Christian."³⁷

It is not surprising that Disraeli's response would be interpreted in terms of racial pride, since he frequently expressed such feelings. However, the extrapolation of Disraeli's feelings to those of regret because he uttered the words "on the true faith of a Christian" further undercuts his loyalty to the Church. While The Illustrated London News lends support to the Jewish argument that conversion is frequently without conviction, it also fuels the distrust of Disraeli, the "Jewish" politician, since his racial affinity to Rothschild overshadows his connections to the Church and England. A similar sort of logic is used by individuals such as Goldwin Smith who question the patriotism of Anglo-Jews. This practice of opposing loyalty to the Jewish community (as either a racial or religious group) with a sense of allegiance to the British state helps sustain the perception that Jews

³⁷"Sketches in Parliament," The Illustrated London News 33 (July 1858): 113.

are "alien." In the latter half of the century, The Jewish Chronicle responds to this perception by its disavowal of Judaism as a "political" entity, and of the "political" influences motivating its discussion of Disraeli's premiership.

While Anglo-Jews were sometimes viewed with distrust by the British public because of their "alien" origins, Disraeli's behavior only seemed to further intensify this perception. His youthful indiscretions seemed to confirm the view that he had a tangible "oriental" quality to his character.³⁸ In 1826, Disraeli anonymously published Vivian Grey, a novel about the fashionable upper class, that became an instant success. The reading public assumed that it was written by a member of this elite group, but once Disraeli's authorship was made known, he was condemned for misrepresenting his background. The idea that "the author was a youth of twenty-one who had never moved in society" made him

³⁸In fact, his idiosyncratic behavior has been attributed to his foreign, or "oriental," nature by such important twentieth-century critics as W. F. Monypenny and George Buckle. Although dated, their biography of Disraeli is still generally considered to be the most authoritative one, and has informed Disraeli scholarship for most of this century. It contains repeated references to Disraeli's "oriental" background when trying to account for some of his behavior. Disraeli's trip to the East in the 1830's gave "definite purpose ...to that oriental tendency in his nature" (1: 136); and his letters record enthusiasm for the Turks and the East "with an exultation that betrays an excess of Orientalism" (1: 163). W. F. Monypenny and George Buckle, The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (London: John Murray, 1910-20).

"the object of a series of ferocious personal attacks."³⁹ Blake argues that this scandal followed Disraeli throughout his career by casting a shadow of disrepute over his character.⁴⁰ Instead of being dismissed as a youthful blunder, Disraeli's behavior seemed to justify the stereotype of the Jewish adventurer.

His early excursions into politics did little to improve this tarnished image, since he had neither strong political views nor the most reputable supporters. In 1832, Disraeli ran as a Radical in the High Wycombe election, while three years later, he was supporting the Tory cause. He attempted to articulate his political views in a pamphlet "What Is He?" (1835), but they continued to remain obscure even after its publication. His aristocratic supporters were regarded as men of questionable character, so did little to redeem his clouded reputation. Disraeli's strongest supporter, Lord George Bentinck, was better known for his skill at the horse races than his participation in Parliament.⁴¹ Another associate, Lord John Lyndhurst, had "considerable legal ability," but "the license of his conversation, his ribaldry, and cynicism" did not inspire the public's trust.⁴² In addition, the publication of Tancred (1847) with its Middle

³⁹Blake, Benjamin Disraeli, 41.

⁴⁰Ibid., 49.

⁴¹Ibid., 228.

⁴²Ibid., 115.

Eastern setting only worked to earn Disraeli the titles of "mystery man" and political "conjurer." Monypenny and Buckle believe the novel hindered serious consideration of his political ideas because of its reputation as "a mere mystification."⁴³ Although Disraeli inspired a group of followers to form the Young England movement, he never seems to have embodied the ideal characteristics of an English statesman.

In fact, the British Quarterly Review specifically links Disraeli's shortcomings as an English statesman to his "foreign" or Jewish ancestry. He is described as "one of the most conspicuous figures in the political drama of our time," but his influence on English political life has had "demoralizing effects."⁴⁴ This seems to be generally attributed to Disraeli's failure to recognize the need for morality in political life and to understand the English character:

He is a stranger, not only to the age, but to the national character....Mr. Disraeli has studied it long and carefully, but his conclusions are not much more trustworthy than those of a shrewd and observant foreigner....But the ordinary everyday temper of the average Englishman...he has never been able to

⁴³Monypenny and Buckle, 3: 50. In addition, Blake agrees that the publication of Tancred was a serious political risk since Disraeli was well-known as a member of the opposition, and his supporters were conservative churchmen and landowners. Robert Blake, Disraeli's Grand Tour (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 116.

⁴⁴[Herbert Henry Asquith], "Political Career of Mr. Disraeli," British Quarterly Review 64 (July 1876): 179.

comprehend.⁴⁵

The reader is repeatedly reminded of Disraeli's alien origins as a liability that he has overcome but also as a deficiency for which he can never compensate. "Englishness" is something that he must study or that he attempts to "affect." Disraeli trivializes the seriousness and moral gravity of English political life by treating it as a "game" to be played in order to satisfy his own ambitions. This article repeatedly implies that while his "unique combination of intellectual and moral excellencies" have helped foster his political success, he is still "an alien by birth" and an "adventurer in public life," whose claim "to the highest place which an English subject can occupy" seems fraudulent.⁴⁶

Just as in the case of Anglo-Jewry, there is little in Disraeli's background that justifies this portrait of him as a "foreigner." Jews were officially expelled from Britain in 1290 (except for a few individuals who remained), but with the help of Oliver Cromwell and Christian apologists were allowed to resettle in 1656. By the nineteenth century, there had been several generations of "native" Jews in England. Cecil Roth's study of Disraeli's ancestors indicate that several of them had been established residents of England:

The other five great-grand-parents were all Italian Jews, some belonging to the element that had immigrated from Germany during the sixteenth-century, others to the

⁴⁵Ibid., 177.

⁴⁶Ibid., 173.

native stock established since Roman times...providing him with an ancestor in the fifth generation resident in England....⁴⁷

Such "native" Jews were long considered subjects of the Crown because they were born within English territories, and although subject to some additional legal scrutiny, they were allowed to own landed property by 1718, thus further establishing their sense of connection to England.⁴⁸ While there were continuing waves of Jewish immigrants throughout the nineteenth century, a highly anglicized stock of "native" Jews who considered themselves Englishmen always remained discernable. In fact, James Picciotto's Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History (1875) functioned to demonstrate these interconnections between the Jews and England. The persistent identification of Disraeli and the Jews as "foreign" suggests there was resistance to the vision of Jews as integral members of English society.

Yet, another index of Disraeli's participation in the negotiation of Englishness and Jewishness is the assessment of his behavior during the emancipation movement. Disraeli's comments about Jewish emancipation will be considered in the following chapters, but it is important here to draw attention to Abraham Gilam's study of Anglo-Jewish attitudes towards

⁴⁷Roth, 13.

⁴⁸M. C. N. Salbstein, The Emancipation of the Jews in Britain (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1982), 45-48.

Disraeli during the 1840s and 1850s.⁴⁹ Gilam concludes that the Jewish community wished to distance itself from Disraeli during this period. This is evidenced by the observation that Anglo-Jews never actively sought Disraeli's support for their movement, even after he was elected to Parliament. Anglo-Jews argued for emancipation on the premise that they should be granted the same civil rights as any other British citizens. In contrast, Disraeli based his arguments on biblical and religious history, rather than a belief in religious liberty. He also made appeals to the Jewish community for conversion, so that there were similarities between his arguments and those of Christian missionaries. Gilam observes that Disraeli "did little to offer or promote solutions to the Jewish problem," but tended to maintain a passive position that was characterized by silent votes and minimal intervention.⁵⁰

However, Gilam believes that the Jewish community was unduly critical of Disraeli's voting record in regards to emancipation bills.⁵¹ He consistently supported Liberal bills put forth in the 1840s and throughout the 1850s. Only in 1850 and 1854 did he oppose the measure, while he abstained from voting in 1856. On these occasions, the bills for Jewish

⁴⁹Abraham Gilam, "Anglo-Jewish Attitudes toward Benjamin Disraeli during the Era of Emancipation," Jewish Social Studies 42 (1980): 313-22.

⁵⁰Abraham Gilam, The Emancipation of the Jews, 1830-1860 (New York: Garland, 1982), 162-3.

⁵¹Gilam, "Anglo-Jewish Attitudes towards Benjamin Disraeli," 321.

emancipation were enmeshed in other political struggles such as the Irish question so that they conflicted with his Tory sensibilities. Anglo-Jews seemed to expect Disraeli to support emancipation bills even when such actions jeopardized his political standing. The Jewish Chronicle went so far as to express its hope that Disraeli might one day abandon the Tory party in favor of the Liberal:

Even Mr. Disraeli himself who, we are convinced, is a liberal in heart, in whose veins flows Jewish blood (and what else, but liberalism can beat in the Jewish pulse), will one day...rid himself...of his early associations. There is every hope...[that] the day is approaching when, among the members of the present liberal and talented government will appear the name of--Benjamin Disraeli.⁵²

This passage not only works to strengthen Gilam's argument about the unrealistic expectations of the Anglo-Jewish community with regards to Disraeli, but it suggests that "Jewishness" does indeed dictate political affiliation, an impression that The Jewish Chronicle will later work hard to dispel. It also highlights a more subtle concern of the community: how Disraeli's politics--because he has "Jewish blood"--reflects on the Anglo-Jewish community as a whole.

As in the case of his conversion, Disraeli's later political success fosters a revisionist history of his behavior during the emancipation era. He is described as heroically risking his career and reputation to aid a

⁵²M. H. Breslau, "Benjamin Disraeli and the Jews," Hebrew Observer, 21 April 1853, quoted in Abraham Gilam, "Anglo-Jewish Attitudes toward Benjamin Disraeli during the Era of Emancipation," 320.

community with which he has only minimal associations. "The New Premier" slightly alters his voting record in order to demonstrate his "sympathy" with the Jewish cause:

Disraeli always voted, and more than once spoke, in favor of Jewish emancipation. At the very time when he was aspiring to lead the proud conservative party...he gallantly risked the attainment of that ambition by voting for the admission [of Jews]...and by making a brilliant speech in their favor....And the Cabinet in which he was second in command proposed and carried a resolution by which the admission of Jews to the Legislature was secured....⁵³

This account avoids any mention of those occasions when Disraeli voted against emancipation while also failing to comment on the content of his speeches on this issue. Disraeli's support of the cause seems noteworthy specifically because he is a convert and outside the Jewish milieu: "What is more remarkable is that he was not nurtured or bred in a knowledge of Judaism, not in intimate contact with the Jewish community--for his conversion was effected at a very early age...."⁵⁴ By the 1870s, he seems to have become one of the outstanding heroes of the emancipation movement, so much so "that the Jewish community owes much to Disraeli for his persistent and courageous advocacy of Jewish political rights and Jewish intellectual superiority."⁵⁵

These later assessments of Disraeli's efforts on behalf

⁵³"The New Premier," 4.

⁵⁴"Editorial Essays," review of Lothair, by Benjamin Disraeli, The Jewish Chronicle, 19 August 1870, p. 4.

⁵⁵Ibid.

of emancipation seem to reveal a great deal about the pressures felt by the Jewish community in the latter half of the century. The authors of these articles neither quote nor paraphrase any of the comments that Disraeli made about Jewish emancipation, so that there is little to undermine their accounts. In fact, these later narratives seem to use Disraeli as a model Jew who is willing to confront prejudice even at the cost of social acceptance and career advancement. Nor did his conversion to Christianity prevent him from sympathizing with the Jewish cause, and "render[ing] justice to the [Jews]."⁵⁶ As Prime Minister, Disraeli functions as a "Jewish" success story by acknowledging his ancestral ties and at the same time, achieving a position of power and social prominence. This revisionist history of Disraeli's activities takes shape at a point in the nineteenth century when anti-Jewish feeling was increasing due to a complex set of economic and social problems. It suggests Jewish apologists felt pressured to find positive ways to reinforce Jewishness in a climate of latent social prejudice.

Consequently, Disraeli's successful political career is used as unquestionable evidence for "Jewish genius." His achievements are attributed to his innate "racial genius" so that they can be used to exemplify how Jews excel in areas other than finance: "as Jews, we recognise in the attainment

⁵⁶"Editorial Essays," review of The Wondrous Tale of Alroy, 10.

of Benjamin Disraeli to the proud premiership of this great empire a fresh proof of the triumph and genius and innate energy of the race from which he springs...."⁵⁷ However, Disraeli's career not only functions as tangible evidence of this "genius," but also undermines the stereotype of the Jew as moneylender:

We are anxious to urge that our race has claims to consideration by reason of abilities other than those of mere commercial or acquisitive nature....We wish to offer fresh proof that the Jewish race...appears to be gifted with special talents and aptitude of statesmanship.⁵⁸

The paper, intent on making its point, situates Disraeli in the context of a long line of Jewish leaders with the purpose of demonstrating "the genius of the Hebrew race...in the great duty of serving humanity."⁵⁹ This protracted argument attacks the stereotype of the Jewish moneylender, but it also denies a material reality of Anglo-Jewish life: a large portion of the community was involved with finance. By ignoring this reality, the paper avoids confronting those social and political factors that limited Jews to this occupational area. For example, the University Test Act continued to place limitations on educational opportunities afforded to Jews until its repeal in 1871, and as Endelman explains, university education was not a guarantee of increased social status, nor of success in the kinds of

⁵⁷"The New Premier," 4.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

careers that Jews were expected to pursue.⁶⁰

As the century progressed, Disraeli's claims about the importance of Jewish contributions to Western culture as well as his verbose expressions of racial pride seemed to gain tacit acceptance at least by those writing for The Jewish Chronicle. He is credited with breaking the silence that had long allowed the Jewish presence in modern society to remain unacknowledged and undervalued. Disraeli is described as "the religious philosopher of his age" who "discovered and drew light to the Hebrew element of advanced modern society, and gave to the race from which he sprang the pre-eminence which is its due."⁶¹ His views seemed to be validated as they gained acceptance by the English Christian and the Anglo-Jew:

To the credit of the intelligence of England...the truth of Disraeli's views were to a certain extent acknowledged....He was the first, who not only broached to the Christian world of England the superiority of the Semitic race, but who first contested its inferiority....⁶²

Consequently, The Jewish Chronicle acknowledges the debt of gratitude owed to Disraeli, since "he did for us Jews what we Jews had not the courage or intelligence or perhaps the opportunity to do for ourselves--he lifted the veil which

⁶⁰Todd M. Endelman, Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History 1656-1945 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 79.

⁶¹"Editorial Essays," review of Lothair, 22 July 1870, 12.

⁶²Ibid.

concealed our glorious past from our worldly present."⁶³ Disraeli's increased stature in the eyes of Anglo-Jews seems to be that product of both his political standing as premier, and the intense pressure to demonstrate the fitness of the Jew for participation in post-emancipation society. He "contested" the "inferiority" of the race, and he "lifted the veil" hiding its "glorious past," so that the "Jewishness" cannot be easily dismissed or emptied of its distinctiveness by reference to universal principles that have been passed on to Christianity. Although Disraeli's "Jewishness" is riddled with contradictions, he remains far too influential a figure for Anglo-Jews to simply abandon or disown.

This discussion of Disraeli's relationship to the Anglo-Jewish community provides a context for the chapters on Alroy and Tancred that follow because it suggests that even though removed from the Jewish community, he was still identified with it, and his public statements participated in the construction of Anglo-Jewish identity. Both novels appear during the struggle for emancipation, and both are pre-occupied with the public debates over religious conformity and Jewish identity. They also continually explore the question of how the "Jew" is to participate in post-emancipation society without being absorbed by it. While Disraeli's voting record and behavior have been frequently assessed as

⁶³"Editorial Essays," review of The Wondrous Tale of Alroy, 10.

ambivalent, it would be wrong to discount the ideas explored in his novels, or to fail to see them as participating in these larger cultural debates. They present an often troubled vision of Jewish integration into English society that tends to focus on unresolved conflicts both within the Jewish community and England itself. In his less clearly defined position as "neither an apostate nor a Jew," Disraeli seems to simultaneously reveal the antipathy towards Jews as well as the pressure to recast Jewishness in ways that will satisfy English sensibilities.

CHAPTER III

GRASPING "THE SCEPTRE OF SOLOMON":

THE WONDROUS TALE OF ALROY AND JEWISH EMANCIPATION

The issue of religious toleration helped foster political reform in nineteenth-century England. In 1828, Dissenters were granted the right to hold Parliamentary office, while Catholic disabilities were relieved the following year in response to the growing unrest of the Irish. Shortly after the success of these groups, Anglo-Jews also began what was to become a protracted campaign for their emancipation. The early proponents of emancipation tended to be wealthy Jews who had increasingly come to identify with English institutions and culture. These highly anglicized Jews viewed disabilities as an embarrassment that could no longer be tolerated. In addition, "a small group of equally ambitious Jews was declaring that it was possible to live in England as a citizen and as a Jew without having to give up one's Jewishness."¹ Emancipation was not only a political goal, but an important aspect of the emerging Anglo-Jewish identity for those Jews who wished to actively participate in English society.

However, opponents and even some Jews themselves

¹Endelman, 282.

frequently characterized the agitation for emancipation as misguided. An article appearing in Fraser's Magazine, "On the Civil Disabilities of British Jews" (1830), pointed out that the removal of disabilities would have little impact on the community at large. Such efforts were seen as better spent on improving the more immediate economic conditions of the Jewish poor. The author of this article appeals directly to Jewish readers by urging them to focus on their religious duties and abandon their movement for civil liberties. It is not the practice of Judaism that he sees as jeopardized but the fulfillment of biblical prophecy:

You are now outcasts and wanderers, because you have rejected Him whom we believe to be the true Messiah, who was spoken of by the prophets. You say that your dispersion is a punishment for your sins, and that you will be gathered together again, one fold under one shepherd by the Messiah, for whom you look. Till then you are to be scattered among the nations, not to be collected until he shall come. How can you, then, seek temporal power--look for a whole sceptre--inoculate yourselves among the heathen--before that day arrives?²

This appeal goes beyond the more common argument that the failure of Jews to recognize the Christian Messiah makes them incapable of serving in a Christian legislature. The dispersion of the Jews is seen as a punishment that denies them both their own national existence, and the opportunity to participate in the government of any other nation. In addition, Fraser's Magazine implies that the behavior of those Jews supporting emancipation is inconsistent, if not morally

²[William Magnin?], "On the Civil Disabilities of British Jews," Fraser's Magazine 1 (June 1830): 547-8.

questionable, because it indicates that they are willing to sacrifice their religion for "temporal power."

This article highlights the distinction that exists between Jewish participation in government on a local and a national level. Jewish political interests should be limited to the activates of local government that may impact on their community. The limited political participation of the Jews will ensure that they are able to fulfill their biblical role, because they will not be enmeshed in the struggle for "temporal power." Since Jews are to remain aloof from national politics, this perspective dismisses any serious consideration of Jewish emancipation, and discounts the ability of the Jewish community to effect the struggles for its own civil rights. This article also suggests a latent fear of Jewish influence on English power structures, even though most Jews could not have afforded the cost of running for parliamentary office. If Jews abandon their political pretensions in favor of their religious duties, Parliament and the Crown both will be protected from Jewish influence, since the "sceptre," a symbol of temporal power, will remain out of reach. According to Fraser's Magazine, it is the moral duty of the Jew to relinquish any claim to temporal power.

Three years after the appearance of this article in Fraser's Magazine, Benjamin Disraeli published his novel The Wondrous Tale of Alroy (1833). The novel is loosely based on the legend of David Alroy who was the leader of a twelfth-

century messianic movement, but Disraeli also invests his narrative with pre-occupations about nineteenth-century Jews. A comparison of the novel to the standard histories of Alroy's life brings such preoccupations into relief.³ Historians generally believed that Alroy was inspired by his study of Jewish mysticism to lead the Jews of Northeast Caucasus in a revolt against their Moslem rulers. One version of the story describes how "two impostors forged a letter from Alroy in which he promised to convey the Jews of Baghdad to Jerusalem by night, on the wings of Angels."⁴ Fearing the growing unrest, the Sultan threatened to slaughter the Jews if Alroy did not abandon his cause. The danger that his movement posed to the well-being of the Jewish community became so overwhelming that his father-in-law murdered him. His untimely death exposed him as a false messiah whose activities were detrimental to the Jews of Baghdad. In contrast, Disraeli's Alroy is portrayed as a noble defender of the Jews, who for a short time, grasped the "sceptre" of temporal power by overthrowing their oppressors. The novel attributes Alroy's downfall to his all consuming love for a Moslem, and his neglect of communal responsibilities, and religious observance. In his final moments, Alroy redeems himself when he chooses to face death at the hands of his captors rather

³The background information for this discussion is taken from The Jewish Encyclopedia, 1901 ed., s.v. "Alroy, David," and Encyclopedia Judaica, 1972 ed., s.v. "Alroy, David."

⁴Encyclopedia Judaica, s.v. "Alroy, David."

than recant his religious beliefs.

Although Alroy is set in the twelfth-century Baghdad, this chapter will argue that the novel actively engages in a critique of the movement for Jewish emancipation. Disraeli challenges the stereotype of Jews presented in Fraser's Magazine that portrays them as aimless wanderers doomed to remain disenfranchised. His revision of Alroy's story empowers the Jews of Baghdad by depicting them as a viable political force able to undermine the existing stability of the larger society. This revision calls into question the practice of discounting the Jewish minority as a political force in nineteenth-century England. The novel also portrays tensions within the twelfth-century Jewish community that parallel the intra-Jewish debate over emancipation. It depicts the conflicts that emerge while trying to balance secular responsibilities with religious duties, and the challenge that this situation poses to Jewish traditions. Moreover, Disraeli's novel grapples with a recurring theme in the fashioning of an Anglo-Jewish identity: the maintenance of Jewish distinctiveness in an increasingly secular society.

This approach to Alroy is particularly significant, since the novel has not been previously contextualized in debates over Jewish emancipation taking place in the 1830s. Nineteenth-century reviewers seemed content with debating whether or not Alroy should be considered a hero or a false Messiah. The Monthly Review stresses that "the most authentic

account" shows Alroy to be "either an enthusiast or an imposter."⁵ The reviewer concludes that "[the novel] is altogether a mere emanation of eccentric fancy resting in its own licentiousness."⁶ In contrast, The Athenaeum describes how "a true heroic loftiness of soul, such as influenced devout men of old...glows and flashes through the whole narrative."⁷ Edward Bulwer-Lytton credits Disraeli for his novel's "stirring adventure" and "gorgeous description," but then points out that Alroy was an imposter who "assumed to himself the ambition of a king and the sanctity of a Messiah."⁸ However, they fail to acknowledge the immediate significance of this new version of David Alroy's story that depicts Jews who actively pursue political power and for a time, are successful at obtaining it. This portrait of a noble Jewish character who undermines the existing stability of his society by leading a revolt presents a striking contrast to Fraser's Magazine which urges Jews to abandon their struggle for emancipation.

While more recent critics have largely favored

⁵"New Novels," review of The Wondrous Tale of Alroy, by Benjamin Disraeli, The Monthly Review, n.s., 1 (April 1833): 588.

⁶Ibid., 589.

⁷Review of The Wondrous Tale of Alroy, by Benjamin Disraeli, Athenaeum 1 (March 1833): 150.

⁸[Edward George Bulwer-Lytton], review of The Wondrous Tale of Alroy, by Benjamin Disraeli, The New Monthly Magazine 37 (March 1833): 343.

psychological approaches to Alroy, Richard Levine and Hani al-Rabeh provide important historicist studies.⁹ Levine sees Alroy as important to Disraeli's later political development, since it explores ideas that reemerge in the Young England novels. It "articulates his debt to the past," reveals his Hebraic consciousness, and develops "the efficacy of great, traditional principles and of the destruction inherent in compromising them."¹⁰ Alroy is protected by great traditional principles that help him alleviate the suffering of the Jewish people, and not until he compromises these principles does he fail. In this way, Alroy anticipates Disraeli's commitment to tradition that he discusses in Vindication of the English Constitution (1835) and even later, in the Young England trilogy.¹¹ al-Rabeh specifically considers Alroy in the context of the Zionist theme that he traces through a variety of English novels. Disraeli's novel is characterized as "pre-Zionist" because he does not act on

⁹The most extensive psychological analyses of Alroy include Thom Braun, Disraeli, the Novelist (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981); Daniel Schwarz, Disraeli's Fiction (London: Macmillan Press, 1979); and Robert Peter O'Kell, "The Psychological Romance: Disraeli's Early Fiction" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1974). Also see Anita Norich, "Benjamin Disraeli's Novels: Personal and Historical Myths" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1979).

¹⁰Richard A. Levine, Benjamin Disraeli (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1968), 51.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 53.

his Zionist visions such as those expressed in Alroy.¹² The novel functions as Disraeli's attempt to resolve the conflicts of Jewish separateness and assimilation in the character of Alroy. Disraeli's "pre-Zionist" preoccupations are attributed to his desire to enter public life and to resolve conflicts that he feels about doing so.¹³

Biographical evidence supports al-Raheb's argument that during the 1830s, Disraeli was pre-occupied with his Jewish origins and his entrance into English political life. Alroy's focus on Jews in twelfth-century Baghdad and Syria, rather than in nineteenth-century England can be partly explained by Disraeli's trip to the East in 1830-1. His decision to visit the East was influenced by his need for background materials that he often excerpts from letters written home to his family. Disraeli describes his visit to Jerusalem as "the most delightful of all our travels" in one of these family

¹²Hani al-Raheb, The Zionist Character in the English Novel (London: Zed, 1985), 31.

¹³Ibid., 39. At the time of Alroy's publication there was no widespread Zionist movement in England. English Jews like their German coreligionists were far more concerned with establishing their place in European society. Michael Meyer explains that members of the Reform movement in Germany were even removing prayers for a return to Zion from their services so as to demonstrate their commitment to their immediate place of residence. English reformers would probably have followed this practice except that the strict biblicism in England continued to draw attention to this event as part of the bible's teachings. Michael A. Meyer, A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 175.

letters.¹⁴ In Disraeli's Grand Tour, Robert Blake emphasizes that his tour not only influenced his writing of Alroy and Tancred, but that it "conditioned his attitude towards some of the most important political problems which faced him in his later years--especially the Eastern Question."¹⁵

His experiences in the East do not seem to have detracted from his growing interest in English politics. His letters mention reading about the Reform Bill, introduced by Lord John Russell, in Galignani's Messenger. Disraeli was anxious to return home because he had hopes of running for office after the Reform Bill passed.¹⁶ Though there is some disparity among his biographers, he is generally considered to have written some portion of Alroy on the trip, and on his return to England, to have finished the novel after he lost the Wycombe election of 1832.¹⁷ It was during the election campaign that Disraeli first experienced the prejudices confronting the "Jew" who desires to enter national political life.

Disraeli's Alroy is a complex response to the idea that Jews should remain in a limited political sphere. The novel opens with a criticism of those Jews who believe that the

¹⁴Benjamin Disraeli, Benjamin Disraeli Letters, ed. J. A. W. Gunn et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 1: 188.

¹⁵Blake, Disraeli's Grand Tour, 3.

¹⁶Ibid., 86.

¹⁷O'Kell, 105. Also see Blake, Benjamin Disraeli, 56.

security and prosperity of their community can only be maintained with servitude. Bostenay who acts as the leader of the Jewish community contrasts with Alroy because he desires to maintain the status quo. His return from paying tribute to the Caliph is surround with such pomp and wealth that "it might have been taken for a day of triumph rather than of tribute."¹⁸ Bostenay is pleased that the Caliph has allowed the Jews to offer their tribute with this dignified procession, rather than having to be demeaned by "[dragging] the accursed tribute upon foot."¹⁹ Yet, this satisfaction is fleeting as Bostenay, "the Prince of Captivity," realizes such prosperity is tainted by servitude: "Dreams! Dreams! we have fallen on evil days, and yet we prosper."²⁰ Bostenay sees the Jews as passive recipients of the Caliph's beneficence, while acknowledging that "the age of power has passed; it is by prudence now that we must flourish."²¹ This "prudence" will protect the security and prosperity of the Jews, while also preventing them from actively seeking political power.

Alroy rejects this role of passive servitude but as in historical accounts, only to be censored for jeopardizing the

¹⁸Benjamin Disraeli, Alroy, Hughenden Edition (London: Longmans, Green, 1881), 1. The Hughenden edition uses the shortened title Alroy, but the novel originally appeared as The Wondrous Tale of Alroy.

¹⁹Ibid., 2.

²⁰Ibid., 4.

²¹Ibid.

safety of the community. He is especially displeased with Bostenay for having paid tribute to the Caliph. In addition, Alroy refuses to assume such duties when he comes of age, because he will not be treated as a "dishonored slave" living an ignoble existence. Bostenay reproaches the young man, noting that "there needs but little spirit to be a moody patriot in a sullen home," but Alroy continues to brood over his dishonored state:

'My fathers, my heroic fathers, if this feeble arm cannot redeem your heritage; if the foul boar must still wallow in thy sweet vineyard, Israel, at least I will not disgrace you. No! Let me perish.'²²

He feels compelled to actively "redeem" Israel's honor as well as to reject the passive servitude of "the Prince of Captivity." Alroy seems to be nothing more than a self-indulgent youth who has few concerns about the danger that his ideas might pose to the stability of the community.

Yet, it is his inability to accept this position of servitude that will empower him to protect both Jewish traditions, and members of the community. During a visit to the tombs of Mordecai and Esther, Alroy refuses to allow Alschiroch, the Moslem governor of the city, to use the graveyard as a thoroughfare.²³ Alroy becomes the defender of

²²Ibid., 9.

²³Disraeli's portrayal of Moslem characters reveals the complexity of nineteenth-century attitudes towards Islam and the East. While my chapters on The Wondrous Tale of Alroy and Tancred allude to the impact of the eastern setting on the literary representation of the Jew, they do not contain an extensive analysis of Disraeli's characterization of Moslem or

tradition by protecting his ancestors' tombs from desecration, but in doing so, he sets into motion a series of events that leads to Alschiroch's murder. While making his way around the graveyard, Alschiroch encounters Alroy's sister Miriam and her maids as they collect water from a nearby fountain. He amorously embraces Miriam whose cries for help are answered by Alroy. He rescues his sister by murdering her attacker which convinces him of his own capacity for heroic action like the great Jewish heroes of the past:

'Why, this is my Goliath! a pebble or a stick, it is the same. The Lord of Hosts is with us. Rightly am I called David.'²⁴

He relies on "the Lord of Hosts" for the strength to protect his sister just as his namesake did in his battle with Goliath. The women who witness Alroy's murder of Alschiroch also imply that the confrontation has divine approval as they chant: "'WE COME, O DAUGHTER OF JERUSALEM! WE COME; FOR THE LORD HAS AVENGED US, AND THE SPOILER IS SPOILED.'²⁵ This scene suggests that Alroy's assent to power will be aligned with the spiritual condition of the Jews, since he protects their traditions and their "virtue."

Arab characters. Aziza Mohammad Anbar provides a specialized study of this issue in "The Middle East in Disraeli's Imperial Imagination" (Ph.D. diss., Claremont, 1988). In addition, Edward Said examines nineteenth-century cultural assumptions about the East and their political implications in Orientalism (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

²⁴Disraeli, Alroy, 16.

²⁵Ibid., 15.

Alroy's acts of self-assertion culminate in his role as military leader in the Jewish revolt against the Moslems. His leadership role exemplifies the intimate connection between religious faith and political power that underwrites the novel. After the murder of Alschiroch, Alroy takes refuge with his spiritual guide Jabaster who has mastered an esoteric form of Jewish mysticism called the Kabbalah. Jabaster sends Alroy to the Great Cavern of Genthema where he has a mystical experience during which he is transported to a room lined with the thrones of past Hebrew kings. Alroy takes the "sceptre of Solomon" from its bearer in order to have a share of that strength which animated past Jewish leaders:

Pale as a spectre, the Pilgrim, whose pilgrimage seemed now on the point of completion, stood cold and trembling before the object of all his desires and all his labours. But he thought of his country, his people, his God; and while his noiseless lips breathed the name of Jehovah, solemnly he put forth his arm, and with a gentle firmness grasped the unresisting sceptre of his great ancestor.²⁶

While Alroy's desire for personal greatness seems to play a part in his success, the thoughts of "his people" and "his God" indicate that his sense of patriotism and religious faith are far more important to his assumption of power. Alroy's spiritual preparation with Jabaster, his vision of the temple, and his emotional identification with great religious leaders of the past are all preparatory to his assumption of a leadership role. It is in accordance with the biblical tradition of great Jewish leaders that Alroy unifies his

²⁶Ibid., 92.

people as a strong political and military body in order to overthrow their oppressors. Even as Alroy's armies prepare for battle, they faithfully observe the Sabbath, suggesting that the strength of the military and the reestablishment of the nation are intimately connected to religious faith.

This description of Alroy's ascent to power and the success of his military campaigns takes on added significance when considered in light of the arguments made by the periodical press. In contrast to Fraser's Magazine, Alroy's experiences imply that the Jew may be morally bound to assume temporal power as biblical history itself evidences. In fact, religious observance further strengthens the resolve of those Jews who follow Alroy in revolt. Without abandoning or neglecting their ties to Judaism, the poor Jews of Amaden proved themselves to be a formidable threat to their oppressors suggesting that their community is a viable political or in this case, military force capable of undermining the stability of the larger society. This exercise of power by the Jewish community provides an alternative account of the Jews' relationship to temporal power, one that actively endorses a commitment to political action.

Disraeli may have found a source for such a narrative of seething Jewish revolution from his observations of Irish Catholic struggles for emancipation. Although the opening of Parliament to Dissenters and Catholics would seem to imply

political progress, Machin argues that "Catholic Emancipation as passed in 1829 was neither the product of toleration, nor did it have any tangible effect on the promotion of toleration."²⁷ Irish Catholic unrest posed a continued threat to the stability of the British empire during the agitation for emancipation. After the Irish rebellion in 1798, Ireland based its acceptance of union with England on the assumption that Irish Catholics would have legal rights equal to those of Protestants. They were granted the right to vote, but they were not allowed to hold any major political offices or to be members of Parliament.²⁸ The Irish responded to these and other abuses such as unfair land settlements with violence. In the 1820s, Daniel O'Connell formed the Catholic Association that helped organize protests against British treatment. He was elected to Parliament with the backing of the Irish Catholics but could not take his seat because of the disabilities. The relief act of 1829 was passed to avoid civil war that the election of O'Connell threatened to produce.

The use of emancipation to pacify the Irish Catholics and protect the political stability of the empire was applauded by The Edinburgh Review. In fact, the periodical indicates that

²⁷G. I. T. Machin, The Catholic Question in English Politics (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 194.

²⁸This discussion of Irish Catholic emancipation is drawn from G. N. Clarke, ed., The Oxford History of England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), vol. 13, The Age Reform 1815-1870, by E. L. Woodward, 314-339.

it was one of the few "alternatives" to "civil war":

[Irish political agitation] must cease either by the combined operation of good government, and improved principles among the people, or it must lead to the fearful issue of civil war and convulsion. To produce the first of these alternatives, and to avert the second, ought to be the object not only of anxious desire...of all who wish well to Ireland, and who are desirous of maintaining for the British empire her rank among the civilized nations of the world.²⁹

English Catholics, whose political position was not much different than that of the Jews, would not have successfully obtained emancipation without the Irish Question. Parliament relieved Catholic disabilities thinking that it would alleviate the political problems in Ireland. The events surrounding the Irish Question suggest that the failure of Jewish emancipation at this time may be partly due to the insignificance of Jews as a political force. Though portrayed as a threat to English political institutions by the periodical press, they posed no threat of violence or impending revolution as the Irish did.

Although the Irish and the Jewish questions might initially seem unconnected, they are constantly linked in the periodical literature that discusses relief for the Jews during the 1830s. In "On the Civil Disabilities of British Jews," the author reminds the reader how the legislature was endangered by the removal of Catholic disabilities. Catholics "profess the most anxious desire for overthrowing the Church,"

²⁹[Thomas Spring-Rice], "Ireland," The Edinburgh Review 57 (April 1833): 256.

and "have an establishment of their own prepared at all points to erect upon its ruins."³⁰ He further comments that the admission of the Jews would make the legislature "unchristian" just as the admission of Catholics has the potential to make it "idolatrous."³¹ This argument uses the existing tension between Catholics and Protestants to undermine Jewish claims by suggesting that the removal of disabilities will further erode the integrity of the legislature. Since Anglo-Jews were fewer in number and in no way as militant, their claims for civil rights could be easily brushed aside.

Those supporting Jewish emancipation continually reinforced the view that Jews presented only a nominal threat to the balance of power in Parliament. William Mudford of Blackwood's Magazine argues that Catholic emancipation has had far more serious consequences than the removal of Jewish disabilities could:

We have built a bridge broad enough to allow the passage of seven or eight millions Catholics and Unitarians into the Citadel of the constitution, and we refuse to make it a few inches wider to accommodate thirty thousand Jews! It is like the prudery of a prostitute who limits the number of her bedfellows, fixing the boundary of virtue between ten and a round dozen....³²

Legislators have already compromised their religious beliefs by failing to protect the "Protestant" Parliament from the

³⁰[William Magnin?], 543.

³¹Ibid., 545.

³²[William Mudford], "The Silent Member (No. IV)," Blackwood's Magazine 28 (July 1830): 51.

onslaught of Catholics and Unitarians. Jewish emancipation is merely a formality, another necessary evil in a series of many other acts of "prostitution." Thomas Macaulay makes a similar argument by noting that Jewish religious views could not "differ more widely than Catholic."³³ English fear that "the most frightful of national calamities" will result from Jewish emancipation is just as unwarranted as in the case of Catholics:

It was in this that some of our politicians reasoned about the Irish Catholics. The Catholics ought to have no political power. The sun of England is set forever, if they exercise political power. Give them everything else; but keep political power from them.³⁴

Macaulay also adds that Jews will remain loyal to the Crown, so that the stability of British institutions will not be threatened by a minimal shift in political power. While the proponents of Jewish emancipation failed to convince the legislature to support the issue, Disraeli's Alroy offers an alternative vision of the Jewish community by portraying it as formidable political force like that of the Irish Catholics.

Disraeli was well aware of the political upheavals caused by the Irish Question. Not only was he in England during the debates over Catholic emancipation, but his novel The Young Duke (1831) includes a character who gives his first parliamentary address in support of this issue. Daniel

³³[Thomas Babington Macaulay], "Statement of Civil Disabilities and Privations affecting the Jews in England," The Edinburgh Review 52 (January 1831): 365.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 367.

Schwarz argues that this scene "demonstrates Disraeli's commitment to this cause, and the cause it represented to him--the opening of the political process to outsiders and minorities, including Jews."³⁵ He further adds that The Young Duke illustrates how Disraeli sees theological differences in terms of their political effects, an observation that could equally be applied to Alroy. However, Disraeli's connections to the issues of Catholic emancipation are not limited to his novel. When Disraeli decided to run for office in 1832, Daniel O'Connell who led the Irish Catholics in the struggle for emancipation voiced support for him.³⁶ Disraeli's political platform during that election included an attack on the Whigs for their foreign policy with Ireland, because he felt it encouraged Irish rebellion.³⁷ The politics of Irish Catholic emancipation provides an important context for Alroy, and the claims that Disraeli makes for his Jewish characters: like the Irish Catholics, they are capable of sustaining a viable political movement.

Disraeli complicates his narrative of Alroy's rise to power and Jewish military success by using it to explore the relationship between national identity and religious

³⁵Schwarz, 27-8. Other critics disagree with Schwarz's assessment of Disraeli's concern over the problems of minorities, and there are several examples of his intolerance towards both Catholics and Dissenters later in his political career.

³⁶Blake, Benjamin Disraeli, 87.

³⁷O'Kell, 105.

conformity. His novel challenges the nineteenth-century assumption that Jews represent a benign political force, but it also remains true to the historical account of Alroy's life by tracing a sequence of events that lead to his downfall. While narrating these events, Disraeli outlines the ongoing struggle between competing conceptions of nationhood. He dramatizes the political upheavals that result when proponents of religious toleration clash with those of conformity. In this way, the political decisions that Alroy makes as he governs his shortlived empire also provide commentary on the debates over Jewish emancipation. The removal of Jewish disabilities is not simply a question of modifying English laws, but it also challenges the political ideologies that underwrite theories of nationhood. In addition, Alroy's struggles highlight the intra-Jewish debates over the practice of Judaism in a post-emancipation society. The novel suggests that emancipation poses a threat to the stability of both England's national identity, and to that of nineteenth-century Jews.

Disraeli explores the problematic aspects of governing a pluralistic society when Alroy is confronted with the task of uniting an empire of Moslems and Jews. Alroy is initially the leader of a Jewish military force that draws its strength from its united faith in Judaism. Once the city of Baghdad is captured, Alroy becomes the leader of the conquered Moslems as well as the newly liberated Jews. He has yet to enter the

city when the Caliph's physician, Honain, arrives with a group of prominent citizens to plead for its safety. As the mediator for the conquered Moslems, Honain attempts to win Alroy's sympathy:

We cannot forget that it is our good fortune not to be addressing a barbarous chieftain, unable to sympathise with the claims of civilisation, the creations of art, and the finer impulses of humanity....we dare to hope everything from a prince whose genius all acknowledge and admire...whose morality has been moulded by a pure and sublime faith, and who draws his lineage from a sacred and celebrated race, the unrivalled antiquity of which even the Prophet acknowledges.³⁸

Honain pleads for religious toleration which he associates with civilization, and "the finer impulses of humanity." He reminds Alroy that he is not "a barbarous chieftain," but one whose "pure and sublime faith" functions to enhance his sense of morality. Consequently, Alroy seems to be acting both in the best interest of the majority of his subjects and as a civilized ruler when he declares that his new empire will be governed on the basis of "toleration."

However, Alroy's actions seem suspect when it becomes apparent that his decision to extend toleration to the Moslems is dictated by a desire to maintain the empire rather than by any moral conviction. Alroy believes that a nation must be ruled by "practical men" who are concerned with maintaining political stability. His empire will only survive if he abandons "sectarian" interests in favor of the "universal":

Universal empire must not be founded on sectarian

³⁸Disraeli, Alroy, 133-4.

prejudices and exclusive rights. Jabaster would massacre the Moslemin...the vast majority, and most valuable portion, of my subjects. He would depopulated my empire, that it might not be said that Ishmael shared the heritage of Israel.³⁹

Alroy's most immediate concern is the protection of the "most valuable portion" of his subjects even if that may mean compromising his religious beliefs. Judaism is identified with "sectarian prejudices" and "exclusive rights" that jeopardize his political power. Alroy behaves like the Jewish apostate who abandons his ancestral faith in favor of social advancement and material gain. As Catholic emancipation demonstrates, the British government preferred to compromise the integrity of the Protestant Parliament rather than see the empire destroyed by social unrest. Both cases illustrate how the universal is valued over the particular because it seems to be the key to political stability.

In fact, Alroy specifically abandons Judaism because he sees it as a system of "sectarian prejudices" and "exclusive rights" that will hinder his ability to govern the empire. Rather than see its religious principles as moral guidelines, he characterizes them as the remnants of "dull tradition":

The world is mine: and shall I yield the prize...to realise the dull tradition of some dreaming priest, and consecrate a legend....Shall this quick blaze of empire sink to a glimmering twilight sway over some pretty province, the decent patriarch of a pastoral horde....I am the Lord's servant, not Jabaster's. Let me make His worship universal as His power....⁴⁰

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., 141.

He repeatedly justifies his behavior by depicting characters like Jabaster and Abidan as fanatically religious. The Jewish general Abidan is not promoted because "he has no other thought but the rebuilding of the temple: a narrow-souled bigot, who would sacrifice the essence to the form."⁴¹ Furthermore, Alroy also fails to recognize the "great tide of deep religion" in the community, so that the Jews appear to him as "a remnant, a feeble fraction of the teeming millions." His children will rely on their Moslem subjects rather than the Jews for power, so he is content to marry the Caliph's daughter Schirene: "the Moslemin will recognize [his children's] rule with readier hearts, when they remember that a daughter of their Caliph gave them life."⁴² His abandonment of Judaism illustrates how his individual desires increasingly conflict with his communal loyalties and become the source of his spiritual decline.

Earlier in the novel, Alroy had proclaimed his disdain for the "dull tradition" of Talmudic Judaism, largely because its practitioners fail to provide strong leadership for the community. His trip to Jerusalem in search of the "sceptre of Solomon" illustrates his frustration with the followers of traditional Judaism. The Rabbi Zimri, the chief rabbi of Jerusalem, is described as "an old man, in shabby robes," rather than as a figure commanding respect. At their first

⁴¹Ibid., 140.

⁴²Ibid., 155.

meeting, Alroy behaves disrespectfully to him, only to learn that he is the city's religious leader. The discussions of the Talmudic scholars, whom Alroy hopes will help him find the "sceptre of Solomon" and liberate the Jews, are devoid of any practical or immediate use. Gilam correctly points out that Disraeli portrays "the study of the Talmud" as "a nonsensical discourse and futile investigation of trivia."⁴³ Like their religious leaders, the Jews of Jerusalem lead a life of poverty, and they are portrayed as incapable of producing strong leaders to alleviate the suffering of even their own community. Alroy who is accustomed to the wealth of the Jewish merchants of Hamadan and is preoccupied with his new found role as liberator finds little that appeals to him in the Talmudic scholars.

Yet, this visit to Jerusalem is essential to Alroy's development as a leader because it links his military success to the spiritual strength that he draws from Jewish mysticism. Disraeli's use of the Kabbalah allows him to create his particular vision of Judaism that serves as the compelling force for the heroic actions of his characters and that appeals to the nineteenth-century taste for "religion of the heart."⁴⁴ The abilities of his Jewish mystics and leaders

⁴³Abraham Gilam, The Emancipation of the Jews in England 1830-1860, 157.

⁴⁴Chapter Ten provides a detailed discussion of the importance that Victorian Jews attached to demonstrating how Judaism like Christianity is also a "religion of the heart."

are portrayed as divine gifts to be used in the restoration of Israel. For example, before Alroy grasps the "sceptre of Solomon," he is inspired by a vision of Jerusalem and particularly of the temple:

And in the front a mighty temple rose, with inspiration in its very form; a temple so vast, so sumptuous, that there needed no priest to tell us that no human hand planned that sublime magnificence!⁴⁵

This scene illustrates how Jewish faith as represented by the temple can profoundly influence its followers. While Alroy recognizes the difficulties that will confront a "weak thing" like himself, he continually performs heroic acts in battle, so that the temple may be rebuilt. Disraeli's emphasis on the "imaginative" and inspirational qualities of Judaism also serve as a response to its detractors who frequently characterized it as a religion consisting only of a rigid adherence to law. The preface of the novel immediately draws the reader's attention to these emotional qualities by its description of the Jews as an "imaginative people" empowered by their past.⁴⁶

In this way, Disraeli constructs his version of a living and inspirational form of Judaism drawn from traditional sources.⁴⁷ The novel refers to a variety of scholarly

⁴⁵Disraeli, Alroy, 90.

⁴⁶Ibid., vi.

⁴⁷Disraeli's knowledge of Jewish traditions and religious practices has been the subject of much debate. Roth points out that he received some religious training from a Hebrew teacher until his baptism in 1817. See Roth, 21-22. Endelman

materials in order to convince the reader that this version of Judaism is indeed authentic. Disraeli attempts to establish his authority as a historian by highlighting his familiarity with Western Classical traditions, so he quotes numerous passages from Latin. He provides footnotes throughout the novel that cite works on Jewish history by such notable scholars as John Lightfoot.⁴⁸ These notes include references to the Talmud, the writings of Maimonides, and Cabalistic books such as the Zohar and Sepher Hapelliah. He uses these references to lend authority to the novel's description of supernatural events such as Jabaster's reading of the heavens, the Daughter of the Voice who speaks to Alroy, and the appearance of the "Sceptre of Solomon":

With regard to the supernatural machinery of this romance, it is Cabalistical and correct. From the Spirits of the Tombs to the sceptre of Solomon, authority may be found in the traditions of the Hebrews for the introduction of all these spiritual agencies.⁴⁹

argues that Disraeli knew very little about Judaism. See "Disraeli's Jewishness Reconsidered," 109. For the purpose of this study, Disraeli's familiarity with the formal aspects of ritual observance or Jewish theology seems to be less important than his awareness of the stereotypic images of Judaism that were used to discredit it. This reading of the novel argues that Disraeli's version of Judaism is significant because it attempts to disprove such stereotypes.

⁴⁸John Lightfoot (1602-1675) was a noted Hebrew scholar who extensively studied the Talmud and Jewish antiquities. Horae hebraicae et talmudicae (Oxford 1658-78) uses the Talmud to elucidate passages in the New Testament. By the time Disraeli was writing Alroy, there had been several editions of his work published, two of which were in English. DNB s.v. "Lightfoot, John."

⁴⁹Disraeli, Alroy, vii.

The Jewish characters continually remain in touch with the spiritual realm through the use of this "supernatural machinery."⁵⁰ This spiritual awareness also demonstrates that Judaism is not a religion of mere "form," but is able to inspire Jews to political action, and to sustain them when oppressed. Disraeli not only enhances the credibility of his novel with references to scholarly material on Judaica, the Hebrew Bible, and distinctly Jewish symbols such as the temple, but he also makes a case for Jewish spirituality as well.

In fact, Disraeli demonstrates how this sense of Jewish spirituality is a sustaining force for his characters when he describes Alroy's downfall. Alroy abandons his intimate tie to the spiritual realm when he compromises his religious convictions by marrying Schirene and neglecting ritual observances. Other Jewish leaders become increasingly uneasy about Alroy's failure to leave Baghdad in order to begin the process of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. Jabaster laments that Alroy "keeps no fast, observes no ritual, and that [Moslem] festive fantasies will not be balked even by the

⁵⁰Disraeli's emphasis on the "mystical" nature of Judaism also works to reinscribe the stereotype of the Jew as conjurer or magician. The novel attempts to negate this association by repeated comments such as Jabaster's "science" has been "exercised but for a sacred or noble purpose." The mystic Jabaster is also described as a holy man who will risk his own life not only to restore Israel to a viable political body with a national existence, but also to reestablish the holy relationship that the Jews had with God in the form of a theocracy. His practice of mysticism serves a divine and moral purpose that divorces him from the practice of magic.

Sabbath."⁵¹ Alroy defends his neglect of Jewish rituals by arguing that they must be adapted to the times:

If man, the crown, the rose of all this fair creation, the most divine of all divine inventions, if Time have altered even this choicest of all godlike works, why shall it spare a law made but to rule his conduct?⁵²

Alroy denies that the Law stands as a divine and unalterable guide to conduct, and minimizes its role in shaping human existence if it too is subject to change. He sees it as merely a superficial force that can be useful only so long as it is convenient to a particular social and cultural setting:

Manners change with time and circumstances; customs may be observed everywhere. The ephod on thy breast proves our faith; and, for a country, is the Tigris less than Siloah, or the Euphrates inferior to Jordan ?⁵³

Like other critics of Judaism, Alroy reduces Jewish rituals to empty formalities that are devoid of religious conviction and obsolete. His marriage to Schirene, his abandonment of Jewish law and the temple, and his growing disrespect for Jabaster are all indications of his withdrawal from the spiritual life of Judaism.

Jabaster tries to warn Alroy that his strength as a leader is derived from the sustaining influence of the Mosaic Law. Unlike Alroy who comes to see Jewish ritual as merely concerned with "outwardness" or manners, Jabaster argues that Mosaic Law is the product of continued spiritual development.

⁵¹Disraeli, Alroy, 169.

⁵²Ibid., 151.

⁵³Ibid., 153.

He acknowledges the "inward spirit" of the Law that has supported Jews in times of adversity and seems to empower all members of the community:

We were then a chosen family, a most peculiar people...keeping to ourselves and to our God, our lives flowed in one great solemn tide of deep religion, making the meanest of our multitude feel greater than the kings of other lands.⁵⁴

Alroy dismisses these comments by noting that God will not mind "some slight relaxation in the ritual of the baker and the bath." Once more Jabaster warns Alroy that ritual practice cannot be separated from the "genius of the people," or the integrity of the "empire":

And mark my words: it was by the ritual of the baker and the bath that Alroy rose, and without it he will fall. The genius of the people, which he shared, raised him; and that genius has been formed by the law of Moses. Based on that law, he might indeed have handed down an empire to his long posterity....⁵⁵

Alroy's downfall is imminent, since his actions are no longer animated by spiritual principles. Not only do the other Jewish leaders plot his overthrow but the Divine also withdraws the "sceptre of Solomon," the symbol of its approval. Alroy's career comes to an end when he is captured and imprisoned by the Moslems who seize this opportunity to regain control of the empire.

Disraeli also uses this dialogue between Alroy and Jabaster to explore the debates over toleration and religious

⁵⁴Ibid., 154.

⁵⁵Ibid., 156.

conformity. Alroy advocates the abandonment of distinctive religious practices in favor of "toleration," but in doing so, he seems to lose all sense of moral conviction. Rather than argue for "toleration" on the basis of religious liberty, he focusses on the issues of convenience and political expediency. Jabaster makes his case for religious conformity by arguing that national identity cannot be separated from religious conviction:

For this He has, by many curious rites and customs, marked us out from all other nations, so that we cannot, at the same time, mingle with them yet be true to Him....Sire, you may be King of Bagdad, but you cannot, at the same time, be a Jew.⁵⁶

Jewish separatism must be maintained because the nation's existence depends on the "inward spirit" of the Law which establishes its ties to God. Jabaster's conception of government does not present a way to unite Moslems and Jews in a single empire any more than Alroy's push towards universalism works to preserve Jewish distinctiveness. Though the novel highlights Jewish political power, it fails to articulate a theory of government or social organization that would jointly accommodate both Jews and non-Jews.

This tension between the desire for increased access to political institutions and the fear of radical assimilation was also a component of the intra-Jewish debates over emancipation. Rabbi Joseph Crooll was probably the most well-known member of a small group of ultra-Orthodox Jews who

⁵⁶Ibid., 155-6.

fought against emancipation for religious reasons.⁵⁷ Like Jabaster, his arguments against emancipation focussed on the need for Jews to maintain close ties to their religion by remaining a separate and distinct group. In his study of the intra-Jewish debate, Salbstein describes how Crooll depicted Jewish residence in England as a temporary "sojourn":

Crooll, contending that the Jews' sojourn in the lands of the Diaspora is about to yield to the imminent restoration to Israel, implied that Jews were incapable of sharing the feelings of Englishmen: this supposition, alone, to gentile opponents of emancipation seemed to render the Jews unworthy of British rights and privileges.⁵⁸

The "gentile opponents of emancipation" used Crooll's argument that Jews were incapable of English patriotism. Salbstein describes how Francis Henry Goldsmid refuted this charge by arguing that "there is nothing in the Jewish character or in the Jewish religion which militates against patriotism."⁵⁹ Yet, Crooll and his followers continued their resistance to emancipation by circulating petitions against it. The emancipation movement may have seemed so forbidding to its Jewish opponents because it was easily identified with the pressures of modernity. By 1835, the Matrimonial Causes Act threatened to place Jewish marriages under the auspices of English civil law, rather than that of communal leaders. A

⁵⁷The background for this discussion is taken from Salbstein, 78-96.

⁵⁸Ibid., 82.

⁵⁹Ibid., 83.

petition for the reform of synagogue services was circulated the following year, advocating the use of fewer prayers, the introduction of English sermons, and the elimination of the second day observance of religious festivals.⁶⁰ Disraeli's Alroy aligns the increased political power of Jews with such changes in religious practice.

Disraeli parallels his description of the intra-Jewish debate over Alroy's behavior with a growing crisis within the Moslem empire itself. Alroy's fleeting rise to power has caused the "Moslemin" to question fundamental structures of authority in their society just as the issue of Jewish emancipation continued to prompt debates over English national identity, the Established Church, and religious conformity. Honain explains that Alroy's military victories have precipitated a crisis for the Moslem community that cannot be remedied by simple retribution:

Thou seest thy career is a great scandal to the Moslemin. I mark their weakness, and I have worked upon it. Thy mere defeat or death will not blot out the stain upon their standard and their faith. The public mind is wild with fantasies since Alroy rose....None know what to cling to, or where to place their trust. Creeds are doubted, authority disputed....So, could we devise some means by which thy lingering followers could be for ever silenced...the public frame brought to a sounder and more tranquil pulse, why, they would concede much, much, very much.⁶¹

At this point, it does not seem to matter that Alroy has fallen from political power because his role as representative

⁶⁰Ibid., 90-93.

⁶¹Disraeli, Alroy, 229-30.

of a "Divine mission" continues to influence the stability of society. Alroy's most forceful weapon against his oppressors has been his conviction of his "Divine mission," and his underlying faith in the God of Israel. His captors attempt to undermine his claims to the Divine by associating him with "infernal powers" and accusing him of succeeding "by the practice of magic arts."⁶² However, they conclude that the only way to restore faith in their own social institutions is for Alroy to publicly recant his religious beliefs.

Alroy uses this moment of crisis to redeem himself by refusing to recant his "Divine Mission" and by affirming the faith he had once been so eager to abandon. While in his prison cell awaiting death, he is visited by Honain who urges him to "publicly affect to renounce [the Jewish] faith and bow before their prophet"⁶³ Honain assures Alroy that these words are merely "form" which once said, will allow Alroy to reclaim his former political position. Schirene also begs Alroy to save himself from certain death by recanting:

Thou hast listened to all Honain has told thee, that wise man, my Alroy, who never erred. 'Tis but a word he counsels, an empty word, a most unmeaning form. But speak it, and thou art free, and Alroy and Schirene may blend again their glorious careers and lives of sweet fruition.⁶⁴

Like Honain, she attempts to persuade Alroy that such a pledge

⁶²Ibid., 246.

⁶³Ibid., 230.

⁶⁴Ibid., 232.

is "an empty word, a most unmeaning form." His continued refusal to utter such an "empty word" so enrages his captor Alp Arslan that he decapitates the young man in a fit of anger. The novel implies that Alroy has been far more defiant by refusing to recite the oath to the Prophet than by leading the Jewish revolt against the Moslems. His execution becomes an act of religious persecution that further ennobles Alroy as a defender of the Jewish faith. Instead of a false messiah, Disraeli creates a character who sees Judaism as a source of inspiration for his acts of political defiance.

The association of Alroy's death with religious persecution is another indication of the novel's participation in the debates over Jewish emancipation. Jewish disabilities are frequently considered the last vestiges of medieval persecution of the Jews. In fact, the strong rhetorical connotations of the term "persecution" are used by proponents of emancipation to heighten the gravity of their arguments on behalf of the Jews.⁶⁵ The Edinburgh Review not only characterizes the opponents of emancipation as "persecutors" but also compares them to "the tyrant[s] who punished [Jews] for not making bricks without straw."⁶⁶ This writer also parallels Jewish disabilities with a variety of medieval

⁶⁵This terminology seems to be a product of the Benthamite movement because "the disabilities of Jews might be regarded as pains or penalties." Polly Pinsker, "English Opinion and Jewish Emancipation (1830-1860)," Jewish Social Studies 14 (1952): 64.

⁶⁶Macaulay, 369.

tortures that have been used to punish Jews:

If this argument justifies the laws now existing against the Jews, it justifies equally all the cruelties which have ever been committed against them,--the sweeping edicts of banishment and confiscation, the dungeon, the rack, and the slow fire.⁶⁷

Jewish disabilities align the English government with the barbarism associated with "tyrants" and "medieval tortures." The novel also indirectly links barbarism with religious intolerance when Honain and Alroy discuss how "tolerance" acts as the basis for governing a "civilized" society. Furthermore, it draws a parallel between England's perpetuation of Jewish disabilities, a nineteenth-century act of persecution, and the religious intolerance that results in Alroy's execution.

Religious intolerance also seems in the novel to be symptomatic of the breakdown of political institutions and the threat of social anarchy. Alp Arslan begins his campaign of intolerance in order to regain control of Moslem society by imposing religious conformity to bolster failing political and religious institutions. On the other hand, The Edinburgh Review argues that such chaos can be avoided with the removal of Jewish disabilities. This reform will ensure that "political power" is distributed to members of the appropriate economic class, and that government will function to protect "property." The desire to maintain order and protect property is a far more important characteristic of future legislators

⁶⁷Ibid., 373.

than their religious affiliation:

If there is any class of people who are not interested, or who do not think themselves interested, in the security of property and the maintenance of order, that class ought to have no share of the powers which exist for the purpose of securing property and maintaining order. But why a man should be less fit to exercise that power because he wears a beard, because he does not eat ham, because he goes to the synagogue on Saturdays instead of going to the Church on Sundays, we cannot conceive.⁶⁸

By the publication of this article, the accumulation of "property" by Jewish merchants and bankers was significant enough to demonstrate their interest in securing its safety. The perpetuation of Jewish disabilities or in other words, religious intolerance, works to jeopardize the stability of society by denying those interested in "securing property and maintaining order" access to political power. Emancipation is not just a Jewish concern, but is intimately linked to the stability of political institutions that further the security for all those interested in maintaining the power of the propertied classes.

In addition to its preoccupation with religious persecution, the novel also participates in the debates over emancipation by its constant references to the dichotomy between "form" and "conviction." Alroy prefers death to compromising his religious views by pledging an oath to the Prophet, even though it will be nothing more than "an empty word, a most unmeaning form." Disraeli parallels Alroy's

⁶⁸Ibid., 365.

personal sacrifice to that of Anglo-Jews who also refuse to compromise their religious beliefs by taking the Oath of Abjuration. This oath was required of all members of Parliament, but it specifically prohibited professing Jews because it required them to repeat the words "upon the true faith of a Christian."

Critics of the oath acknowledged that it could do little to protect the morality of Parliament, since it was only a verbal recognition of a powerful religious institution but required no other action or commitment. Blackwood's Magazine censures the government for placing "form" above conviction as well as for its inconsistency in modifying the oath for Catholics and Dissenters but not Jews. Its primary function had been to prevent Papists from entering government offices, but it is now obsolete: "certain forms...are still kept up when the purposes for which they were originally instituted are gone to decay, making an ancient ceremony, a modern mummary."⁶⁹ Like Alroy, Anglo-Jews have placed "conviction" above "form" even though they sacrifice their rights to parliamentary office. Their act of political defiance seems heightened by the novel's "historical" account of yet another Jew who refuses to deny Judaism for personal gain.

Disraeli himself becomes the link between this historical figure and the nineteenth-century Jewish community. When Alroy realizes that his death is imminent, he begins to fear

⁶⁹[William Mudford], 51.

that his name will be forgotten, or that he will be remembered only for his failings: "'Alas! there is no one to guard my name. 'Twill be reviled; or worse, 'twill be forgotten.'"⁷⁰ His sister Miriam comforts him with the hope that some future poet will one day tell his story:

Never! the memory of great actions never dies. The sun's glory, though awhile obscured, will shine at last. And so, sweet brother, perchance some poet, in some distant age, within whose veins our sacred blood may flow, his fancy fired with the national theme, may strike his harp to Alroy's wild career, and consecrate a name too long forgotten?⁷¹

His role as novelist is inscribed in the narrative itself, since he is now the "poet" inspired by this "national theme." In assuming the role of "poet," Disraeli also draws attention to his Jewishness because he shares with Alroy the "sacred blood."

Furthermore, Disraeli is confronted with the issue of "form," and its implications for the narration of Alroy's story. The epic has traditionally been associated with national themes such as those explored in Alroy. Stuart Curran's study of poetic genres traces the epic's increasing popularity from 1790 to 1825. He explains how this period is permeated with "a sense of historical urgency" fueled by the political upheavals in France, and the uncertainties of

⁷⁰Disraeli, Alroy, 241.

⁷¹Ibid.

British foreign policy.⁷² The production of nationalistic epics is characterized by this urgency "in attempts to adapt the typology of biblical subjects to the historical crisis; in radically subversive and visionary works that would liberate all nations; and naturally in those poems which endeavored to translate national missions into epic dimensions."⁷³ Although appearing somewhat later, Disraeli's "The Revolutionary Epic" (1834) follows this practice of using the epic to explore national themes. His narrative of Jewish liberation in Alroy can also be situated in this tradition, except for his abandonment of poetic verse. The popularity of the epic would seem to suggest that his readers would expect him to use this genre.

In fact, the "form" of the novel has several ideological implications that threaten to undercut the "national theme" of political resistance in Alroy. A hierarchy of genres continued to persist in the nineteenth century that elevated poetry over prose, and seriously devalued fiction. Robert Stang attributes this disapproval of fiction to "the newness of the genre and the enormous quantity of bad fiction being turned out for the circulating libraries." He also adds that assumptions about genre contributed to the perception that prose was inferior to poetry:

⁷²Stuart Curran, Poetic Form and British Romanticism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 159.

⁷³Ibid.

The chief aesthetic justification for the attack was that great literature be based on general truths and general types, not minute particularities, i.e. it could not be realistic, and the novel by its very nature forced the author to imitate the transitory. After all, what was so changeable as manners? And manners, it seemed, were the novel's most natural subject matter.⁷⁴

This characterization of the novel parallels criticisms of Judaism that described it as concerned with "minute particularities," while universal truths were conveyed through Christianity.⁷⁵ Disraeli's choice of the novel as the literary "form" for Alroy would seem to devalue that "national theme" as well as undercut his depiction of Judaism as a source of spiritual inspiration.

However, Disraeli attempts to challenge this hierarchy of genres by developing a literary "form" that he calls "poetic fiction." While his choice of subject matter stays within the epic tradition, he attacks poetic form by announcing that "the age of Versification has past."⁷⁶ He follows William Wordsworth's argument in "Preface to Lyrical Ballads" (1800) by criticizing the artificiality of "poetic diction." Disraeli characterizes his development of "poetic fiction" as

⁷⁴Robert Stang, The Theory of the Novel in England, 1850-1870 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 4.

⁷⁵Alroy himself refers to this characterization of Judaism when he describes ritual practice as "an empty form" that is dictated by "manners."

⁷⁶Benjamin Disraeli, The Wondrous Tale of Alroy (London: Saunders and Otley, 1833), xiii. Disraeli leaves this discussion of the novel's form out of the 1845 edition of the Alroy. It may be that he wanted to downplay this more radical side of his literary innovations.

a liberating effort:

While I have endeavoured to effect my own emancipation from the trammels of the old style, I do not for a moment flatter myself that the new one, which I offer, combines those rare qualities which I anticipate may be the ultimate result of this resolution.⁷⁷

He effects his "own emancipation" as a writer by abandoning the "old style" that would have compromised the significance of his narrative. While he abandons "versification," he still desires "to have recourse to rhythm whenever...its introduction is desirable, and occasionally even to rhyme."⁷⁸ The artist must exercise his power over these elements of style like a judicious political leader: "He must be easy in his robes of state, and a degree of elegance and dignity must accompany him even in the camp and market-house."⁷⁹ Disraeli attempts to "emancipate" himself from the constraints of verse "form," but at the same time, he continues to make aesthetic judgements about poetry. His position as the artist seems to parallel that of Anglo-Jews, since they also wish to be emancipated from the limitations imposed by the "form" of the Oath of Abjuration, while retaining access to political institutions.

This reading of Alroy provides numerous examples of Jews emancipating themselves from the constraints placed upon them, but it also suggests that such actions are not allowed to

⁷⁷Ibid., xx.

⁷⁸Ibid., xxii.

⁷⁹Ibid., xxiii.

multiply uncontrollably. The novel includes acts of political emancipation such as the revolt by the Jews of Hamadan, and even Alroy's refusal to recant his religious beliefs. In addition, Disraeli's depiction of Judaism also functions to free it from the stigma that it is an unfeeling adherence to ritual practice by emphasizing its "inspirational" or emotional qualities. He develops also "poetic fiction" to liberate himself from prevailing aesthetic conventions to some degree. However, this reading indicates that the novel portrays religious conformity as essential for the political stability of the state, whether for Alroy's empire or nineteenth-century Britain's. While toleration is repeatedly linked with the highest forms of civilization, it is also seen here as an inadequate basis for a politically and socially unified nation. The novel implies that a nation built on religious plurality may be faced with the loss of moral purpose, and that it may equally erupt in power struggles between sectarian groups. In fact, Disraeli portrays Alroy's downfall as the result of political instability that has its roots in the religious plurality of his empire, rather than from an inherent lack of leadership ability.

Alroy participates in debates over Jewish emancipation by representing the Jew as empowered but also by indirectly confirming the English fears that Jewish participation in government may compromise the stability of existing political institutions. The consequences of this dual view of

emancipation can be seen in Anglo-Jewish preoccupations about their community's public image. Even during the Queen's Jubilee in the latter part of century, Anglo-Jewish leaders seem to self-consciously fashion the communal image in ways that reinforce English institutional and cultural practices, though they still attempt to maintain a sense of Jewish distinctiveness. This may account for the pre-occupation with the career of Disraeli. He also actively engages in maintaining the political institutions of England, while his novels and his highly dramatized remarks about race draw attention to his Jewish origins.

CHAPTER IV

"HOW ARE THE ELEMENTS OF NATION TO BE AGAIN BLENDED TOGETHER?": TANCRED AND THE JEWISH QUESTION

With the issue of Jewish emancipation unresolved at the close of the 1830s, the debate over the relationship between religion and national identity was to resurface in the following decade. The rhetorical practice of designating England and its system of government as "Christian" was increasingly scrutinized by the proponents of Jewish emancipation. Even in the 1830s, a contributor to Fraser's Magazine noted the hollowness of referring to the "Christianity of the constitution," since only forty years earlier it was considered "essentially Protestant."¹ This broadly termed 'Christian constitution' had the advantage of uniting such disparate groups as Anglicans, Dissenters, and Catholics under a single rubric. It also affirmed the belief that the Christian character of English institutions markedly contributed to their stability.²

The advantages of this "rhetorical" dexterity were not lost on The Jewish Chronicle when it once again made its case

¹[William Magnin?], 544.

²Feldman, 35.

for Jewish emancipation during the 1840s. In "The Christian Country," the Chronicle calls attention to the ease with which political practices may follow a change in rhetorical designation:

we would recommend a further effort of liberality; and having witnessed the widening of the political circle from a "Protestant country" into a "Christian country," we deem it feasible...to follow up the good inspiration, and to extend the circle wide enough to enclose all the loyal sons of the same land; to change the epithet again...to leave the trivial case of finding a distinguishing name for a country...thus liberally constituted to those who live and die for a name, and who have leisure to bestow on mental exertions of such a significance!³

Anglo-Jews considered themselves "loyal sons" of England, and after liberality once more exerted its influence, they would be ready to take their place in this "widening political circle." While the Chronicle attempted to downplay the significance of this "change of epithet" here, it was well aware of the misgivings and uncertainties that hindered any challenge to this "distinguishing name."

Mr. Henry Drummond gave voice to these misgivings in his Parliamentary address of 1847.⁴ Part of his underlying concern seemed to be the function of religion as an unifying

³"The Christian Country," The Jewish Chronicle, 3 January 1845, p. 66.

⁴Henry Drummond (1786-1860) held Parliamentary office intermittently from 1810 until his death. He was generally considered a "Tory of the old school," and his speeches could be characterized as "full of sarcasm and learning, but also of not a little absurdity." He gravitated toward religious questions supporting the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill and the inspection of convents, but voted against the removal of Jewish disabilities. DNB s.v. "Drummond, Henry."

and stabilizing force in Britain. He also supplied a narrative of the "widening political circle" but he was intent on maintaining some sense of control by retaining "a distinguishing name" for England:

After [the Reformation]...the Nonconformists were let in, and Parliament ceased to be a Church of England Legislature, but still it was Protestant. After that they admitted the Roman Catholics, and the Legislature was no longer Protestant, but still it was Christian.⁵

For Drummond, the last defence against liberalism's attack on religion was the designation of England's legislature as Christian. He observed that "this country was yet Christian; but if this measure [emancipation] passed, and the Jews were admitted into Parliament, that could be said no longer."⁶ The admission of Jews to the legislature endangered the unity the term "Christian Parliament" provided and in this way, seemed to challenge the stability of England's national identity.

The Jewish Chronicle had earlier attempted to address such fears by questioning the assumption that Christian faith is "an essential ingredient in the composition of an Englishman," and by asserting that Jewish emancipation would foster the stability of English institutions.⁷ It argued that the New Testament did not contain "a system of Christian politics" that specifically excluded Jews, or that conflicted

⁵Hansard Parliamentary Debates, 3d ser., vol. 95 (1847), col. 1380.

⁶*Ibid.*, col. 1381.

⁷"The Christian Country," The Jewish Chronicle, 6 December 1844, p. 47.

with Jewish religious beliefs.⁸ In fact, the admission of Anglo-Jews to Parliament would further preserve the moral tone of government because Mosaic Law encouraged the cultivation of "private virtues" that "give the public man heightened merit."⁹ Jewish emancipation would affirm the existence of "English liberty" by allowing those "legally capable, irrespective of the condition of [their] birth, to cooperate on equality with [their] fellow subjects, in legislating for the whole people, and in administering the laws thus constitutionally framed."¹⁰ By failing to remove the disabilities, members of Parliament endangered the legislature by excluding Jews "from the ranks of those who watch over the stability of the English state."¹¹ The Jewish Chronicle also attacked those who used the Jewish belief in the coming Messiah as evidence that Jews do not recognize "the permanent stability of our existing political institutions" by noting Christians await judgement day and are not censored for their beliefs.¹² While "widening the political circle" would alter the existing relationship between religion and national identity, the relief of Jewish disabilities would eliminate

⁸"The Christian Country," The Jewish Chronicle, 20 December 1844, p. 58.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰"The Christian Country," 6 December 1844, 47.

¹¹"The Christian Country," 20 December 1844, 58.

¹²"The Christian Country," 3 January 1845, 66.

the anarchy that was latent in the "horrors of religious discord."¹³

Coningsby (1844) and Tancred (1847) are both novels in Disraeli's Young England trilogy that illustrate how Jewish emancipation will contribute to the stability of English institutions, even though it initially challenges existing political hierarchies. Although primarily concerned with the condition of England question, Coningsby (1844) touches on the issue of emancipation with the introduction of a wealthy, but enigmatic, Jewish character. Sidonia functions as a mentor who provides the young English protagonist, Harry Coningsby, with worldly advice, while also managing to make a case for Jewish emancipation. The efforts of Jewish financiers to secure the economic and in turn, the political stability of the empire justifies the extension of full civil rights:

Can anything be more absurd than that a nation should apply to an individual to maintain its credit, and with its credit, its existence as an empire, and its comfort as a people; and that individual one to whom its laws deny the proudest rights of citizenship, the privilege of sitting in its senate and of holding land?¹⁴

Sidonia also warns the reader that the failure to remove Jewish disabilities may prompt a revolt:

The Jews, for example, independently of the capital qualities for citizenship which they possess in their industry, temperance, and energy...are a race essentially monarchical, deeply religious, and shrinking themselves from converts....Yet, since your society has become

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Benjamin Disraeli, Coningsby, Hughenden Edition (London: Longmans, Green, 1881), 248-9.

agitated in England, and powerful combinations menace your institutions, you find the once loyal Hebrew invariably arrayed in the same ranks as the leveller and the latitudinarian and prepared to support the policy which may even endanger his life and property, rather than continue under a system which seeks to degrade him.¹⁵

Like other proponents of emancipation, his argument focusses on the "capital qualities for citizenship" in order to show how Jews have earned this privilege, and how their "qualities" are compatible with existing norms. Sidonia ultimately asks the questions that are fundamental to the success of Jewish emancipation, and to the unification of an increasingly fragmented English society: "'How are the elements of the nation to be again blended together? In what spirit is that reorganization to take place?'"¹⁶

In 1847, Disraeli returns to these questions with the publication of Tancred, the final novel in the Young England trilogy. This novel also reveals Disraeli's concerns over Jewish emancipation, but rather than simply describe the "capital qualities" of Jews, it attempts to reconcile conservative political ideologies with the social and political needs of nineteenth-century Jews. Disraeli shares with The Jewish Chronicle the desire to maintain stable political institutions, but he also believes that religious conformity is an essential element of national unity. The first part of this chapter argues that Tancred endorses

¹⁵Ibid., 249.

¹⁶Ibid., 239.

religious conformity as a basis for government by outlining broad religious principles that will accommodate sectarian religious groups in order to unite them in a new empire. Rather than offering an alternative theory of nationality, Disraeli reinscribes the belief that religious conformity fosters political stability and acts to unify the nation. The second part of the chapter will argue that once Disraeli establishes the primacy of religious conformity, he attempts to reconcile Jewish emancipation with the vision of England as an unified Christian nation. In doing so, Tancred becomes an argument for the significance of Jewish history and religion to the development of Western culture. It also reveals the tensions that emerge between the desire to maintain Jewish distinctiveness, and to integrate Jews into Western society. In this way, Tancred positions Jewish emancipation in the context of larger debates over the relationship between Church and State as well as in those over the relationship between the Anglo-Jew and English society.

While Disraeli is not explicitly concerned with the removal of Jewish disabilities in the first half of the novel, the emancipation movements of both Dissenters and Catholics are portrayed as undermining the stability of English institutions. The success of Catholic emancipation is used to illustrate the failures of the Church of England, rather than the development of a more tolerant society. The Duchess of Bellamont, Tancred's mother, and her family are characterized

as fools because of their naive hope for the conversion of Ireland. They "believed in the millennium, were persuaded that the conversion of the Roman Catholic population of Ireland to the true faith, which was their own, was at hand."¹⁷ A "second Reformation" was to be ushered in by the missionaries to Ireland that the family financially supported. However, the Church of England was ineffectual in its attempt to gain proselytes because it was hampered by inept leadership and pluralism in the Church itself. The "second Reformation" dwindled to the resolution that "even the Puseyites may have candles on their altars, but they must not be lighted."¹⁸ The Church failed not only to establish fundamental religious principles for spiritual guidance but also to provide a framework of morality to help unite and further national interests. When the Bishop attempts to dissuade Tancred from visiting Jerusalem with the argument that "the Church represents God upon earth," Lord Montacute is quick to respond that "but Church no longer governs man."¹⁹

This failure of the "second Reformation" not only undermined popular faith in the Established Church, but the success of Catholic emancipation also profoundly altered the balance of political power. The narrator briefly recounts

¹⁷Benjamin Disraeli, Tancred, Hughenden Edition (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1881), 68.

¹⁸Ibid., 72.

¹⁹Ibid., 74.

this destruction of the Church's political influence:

the impending second Reformation did chance to take the untoward form of the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, followed in due season by the destruction of Protestant bishoprics, the sequestration of Protestant tithes, and the endowment of Maynooth.²⁰

The "destruction of Protestant bishoprics" and "the sequestration of Protestant tithes" refer to a series of reforms aimed at correcting the ecclesiastical abuses of the Established Church, but they also had the effect of curtailing its influence on the legislature and its financial activities. The "endowment of Maynooth," which precipitated the break up of the Young England movement, funnelled State funds away from the Established Church so that they could be used for the training of Irish Catholic priests. Tancred reiterates the view that the emancipation movement has done irreparable damage to the Church, when he observes that "O'Connell has taken a good share of [Parliament's] power."²¹

While the opening of Tancred focusses on Irish Catholic emancipation, Dissenters also contributed to the erosion of Church influence in Parliament. Dissenters never became a well-organized political group, but they formed societies such as the anti-Church and State Association that were to safeguard their gains on behalf of religious liberty.²² The

²⁰Ibid., 70.

²¹Ibid., 137.

²²The details for this discussion of Dissenters is taken from Norman Gash, Reaction and Reconstruction in English Politics, 1832-1852 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 92-118.

issue of State controlled factory schools became a pivotal concern for Dissenting groups because they feared that the Anglican Church would exercise too much authority over them. Norman Gash observes that the Church power began to wane during this period:

[The Church] had been unable to make good its title to superintend national State education; it had, in a wider field, been unable to maintain its old relationship with the State. What was abundantly clear in the 1840's was that the Church could never again lay claim to the loyalty of the legislature through the acid test of specific financial contributions.²³

In addition, Catholic and Dissenter emancipation also contributed to the success of the Reform Bill in 1832 that enlarged the franchise. This increased access of Dissenters and Catholics to political power worked to further limit the Church's influence in Parliament.

Rather than see these changes as indicative of liberal progress or religious tolerance, Tancred depicts them as symptomatic of the loss of religious faith and the failure of English political institutions. He refuses to enter Parliament at his parents' request because he does not feel that it is his "duty to maintain the order of things," prevailing in England.²⁴ His refusal is grounded on the claim that political and religious institutions are no longer "founded upon principle":

In nothing, whether it be religion, or government, or

²³Ibid., 110.

²⁴Disraeli, Tancred, 49.

manners, sacred or political or social life, do I find faith; and if there be no faith, how can there be duty?²⁵

For Tancred, duty is animated by "faith," but the success of emancipation movements causes him to doubt that "religious truth" any longer exists in England. If the Established Church is supposed to be the repository of this truth, he pauses to ask his father, "Why, then, do you support dissent?"²⁶ Such contradictions lead Tancred to conclude that England is "a country divided between infidelity on one side and an anarchy of creeds on the other."²⁷ His vision of government rests solely on the inseparable connection between Church and State, so that political institutions must be underwritten by religious principles.

Tancred's argument for the inseparable relationship of Church and State is furthered by linking religious plurality with governmental instability. Emancipation challenges the view that the Established Church is the sole repository of "religious truth" just as electoral reforms have altered the distribution of power:

Who has the right to govern? The Monarch? You have robbed him of his prerogative. The Aristocracy? You confess to me that we exist by sufferance. The People? They themselves tell you that they are nullities. Every session of Parliament...the method by which power is distributed is called in question, altered, patched up,

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., 122.

and again impugned.²⁸

Tancred's account of the redistribution of political power suggests that there is no "order of things" to be maintained. Traditional sources of power such as the Aristocracy have not only been usurped, but they have contributed to this situation by neglecting their leadership roles as the Duke and Duchess of Bellamont have done. Tancred articulates this national 'identity crisis' when he asks:

What is DUTY, and what is FAITH? What ought I to DO, and what ought I to BELIEVE?²⁹

His trip to the East is a search for "great principles" that will reestablish a recognizable and stable hierarchy of religious beliefs, and political power.

As Disraeli shifts the setting of the novel from England to the East, he demonstrates the need for a "theory" of government that will minimize the political instability fostered by "sectarian" interests. Tancred's meeting with the young Syrian prince, Fakredeen, becomes an extended discussion of such theories. In his brief history of Fakredeen's family and its dealings with the British government, Disraeli not only criticizes the shortcomings of the nation's foreign policies, but the "theory" of government animating its actions both at home and abroad. The Shehaab family had controlled Lebanon until the Turkish invasion in 1841 prompted a civil

²⁸Ibid., 49.

²⁹Ibid., 55.

war. In response to these political upheavals, the Porte, the Shehaabs, and the European powers agreed to install a new government for the area:

The principal feature of this administrative design was the institution of two governors of Lebanon...one of whom was to be a Maronite and govern the Maronites, and the other a Druse and govern his fellow countrymen. Superficially, this seemed fair enough, but reduced into practice the machinery would not work. For instance, the populations in many places were blended. Was a Druse...to govern the Christians in his district?³⁰

This newly installed government failed to accommodate the religious plurality of this society so that Christians governed Druses and vice versa. The "anarchy of creeds" in Lebanon parallels Tancred's assessment of England with its uncertain distribution of power. Disraeli repeatedly links "sectarian" interests with political instability in the East and in Britain. This passage points out, just as Tancred's search for "great principles" does, that one of the overriding concerns of the novel is a search for a theory of government that will minimize the ideological differences of diverse groups.

Fakredeen reveals the inadequacy of "nationality" when he attempts to regain the Shehaab family's political power by uniting a racially and religiously plural society. Throughout the narrative, Fakredeen is preoccupied with political intrigues that he believes will promote the unification of Syria, and return him, the rightful heir of the Shehaab

³⁰Ibid., 347.

family, to power. He expresses his frustration with the concept of "nationality," because it seems to provide an inadequate ideological framework for the unification of a society as diverse as that of "Syria":

But you forget the religious...I have so many religions to deal with. If my fellows were all Christians, or all Moslemin, or all Jews, or all Pagans, I grant you, something might be effected: the cross, the crescent, the ark, or an old stone, anything would do...but I am debarred from this immense support; I could only preach nationality, and, as they all hate each other...that would not be very inviting; nationality, without race as a plea, is like the smoke of this nargilly, a fragrant puff.³¹

Fakredeem considers religious conformity an essential element of national unity, because it has the potential to offer "immense support" to his political movement. The theory of "nationality" propounded here relies on "a vision of the state in which religion, the nation, and the authority of established institutions [are] all connected."³² In Fakredeem's case, this powerful political base of religious conformity is fragmented by the sectarian interests, so he attempts to substitute race as the basis of "nationality," only to be frustrated once more. Disraeli does not attempt to offer an alternative theory of government here, but merely reiterates a conception of the nation that rests on the homogeneity of either, if not both, religion and race.

Disraeli remedies the ideological crisis that both

³¹Ibid., 258.

³²Feldman, 35.

Tancred and Fakredeem face as they attempt to reconstruct the relationship between religious beliefs and the State by advocating the establishment of "theocratic equality." As Tancred makes his way to Sinai in hopes of discovering "great principles," he is visited by the "Angel of Arabia" who announces this "sublime and solacing doctrine":

The equality of man can only be accomplished by the sovereignty of God....In the increased distance between God and man have grown up all those developments that have made life mournful. Cease, then, to seek in a vain philosophy the solution of the social problem that perplexes you. Announce the sublime and solacing doctrine of theocratic equality.³³

The angel's announcement aligns religious principles with the political movement towards "the equality of man," thus restoring a "holiness" or sense of morality to the functioning of the State. It affirms the idea that political and religious institutions must function in an unified fashion in order to resolve "social problems." This renewed relationship "between God and man" remedies both Tancred's frustration with the "anarchy of creeds," and his inability to define his duty to the State. Similarly, Fakredeem's difficulties with the practical aspects of uniting a diverse racial and religious population will also be resolved since "the sovereignty of God" implies a more inclusive form of government that effaces religious and racial differences. Disraeli proposes a theory of government here that rather than confront the concerns of individual groups, creates an allusion of stability and unity.

³³Disraeli, Tancred, 291.

Both nineteenth- and twentieth-century critics frequently find fault with the novel because the announcement of "theocratic equality" provides neither a tangible nor an immediate solution to England's political problems. In 1847, The Edinburgh Review criticized the novel for endorsing "a theosophy which neutralizes the last eighteen hundred years of the world" by attributing to modern civilization the increased separation between God and humankind.³⁴ The reviewer for Bentley's Miscellany notes that readers will be "persuaded that [the novel has] a high object and deep import, but just as firmly persuaded that its object and import remain to be discovered."³⁵ In his recent criticism of Tancred, Daniel Schwarz is less concerned with the angel's revelation than with Disraeli's failure to develop its implications: "The novel does not explore the angel's message as a plausible alternative to political intrigue in Asia or to the decline of the Monarchy and Church in England."³⁶ This failure seems to undermine the social and political critique that Disraeli has developed in Coningsby and Sybil, the other novels in the trilogy.

Other critics argue that Tancred offers a vision of

³⁴[Richard Monckton Milnes], 143.

³⁵[William Cooke Taylor], "The Hebrew, the Saracen and the Christian," review of Tancred, by Benjamin Disraeli, Bentley's Miscellany 21 (1847): 385.

³⁶Schwarz, 101.

spiritual renewal that draws on the unification of the East and West. Rolf Lessenich suggests that Tancred is not pursuing political reform for England, but "an apocalyptical reform to be realized in Jerusalem and on Sinai."³⁷ The novel demonstrates that "Disraeli saw salvation not in the mere fusion, but in a control of western strength by eastern revelation" as a means to alleviate Europe's chaotic existence.³⁸ Levine also interprets the angel's message as offering the possibility of rebirth to decaying European societies. It is grounded in the Kantian distinction between "phenomena and noumena" so that "the East (the realm of noumena) and the West (the realm of phenomena) must unite to produce the birth of this new phoenix."³⁹ The "phoenix image" reenacts the death of "a mock, European-style Christendom" from which "will rise the true concepts of Hebraeo-Christian Law."⁴⁰

However, Disraeli is also using the novel to address the historically specific ideological crisis that is confronting received ideas of the relationship between the Established Church and State. The proponents of emancipation recognized

³⁷Rolf P. Lessenich, "Synagogue, Church, and Young England: The Jewish Contribution to British Civilization in Benjamin Disraeli's Trilogy," in Jewish Life and Suffering as Mirrored in English and American Literature, ed. Franz Link (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1987), 41.

³⁸Ibid., 45.

³⁹Levine, 132.

⁴⁰Ibid., 131.

that the State should have a moral basis, but they questioned the exclusive right of the Established Church to dictate it. "Theocratic equality" may initially seem to offer a new, though impractical, system of government. Yet, by advocating the "sovereignty of God" within the framework of the "Hebraeo-Christian" tradition, Disraeli simply substitutes a more inclusive version of a national religion than that offered by membership in the Established Church. This more inclusive "national religion" accommodates both Jews and various Christian sects, while also reestablishing a general 'religious conformity' that is characterized as essential to the stability of the State. This vision of "theocratic equality" allows Disraeli to advocate Jewish emancipation because it no longer poses a challenge to the "Christian parliament."

The restoration of the relationship between religion and the polity will result in the establishment of the new "empire," which the Angel of Arabia announces. Like ancient Israel, this new "empire" exemplifies how the State can function in the service of religion. England, and all of Europe, are characterized as a rebellious colony by the Angel:

Since the first sun of this century rose, the intellectual colony of Arabia, once called Christendom, has been in a state of partial and blind revolt.⁴¹

This revolt has been fueled by Christendom's idolization of

⁴¹Disraeli, Tancred, 290-1.

"other gods than the God of Sinai and of Calvary."⁴² It has become slave to its "bustling invention and its endless toil," or "Progress." A revivified Asia, animated once again by "a great religious truth," would act as a missionary instilling spiritual principles and remodelling institutions:⁴³

Send forth a great thought, as you have done before, from Mount Sinai, from the villages of Galilee, from the deserts of Arabia, and you may again remodel all their institutions, change their principles of action, and breathe a new spirit into the whole scope of their existence.⁴⁴

This "great thought" will replace the false gods of progress with renewed religious affirmation by instituting a government that draws its principles from Sinai and Calvary. The political schisms resulting from the sectarian interests of Dissenters, Catholics, and Jews will be resolved as part of this process. Thus, the politics of imperialism is characterized as furthering "a new spirit" of religious conformity, one inclusive of Christians and Jews.

In addition, the growth of this new "empire" will allow for greater social control by having a "civilizing" influence. The "infidelity" and "anarchy" that Tancred sees as characterizing nineteenth-century England is not simply the revolt of Christendom against the "God of Sinai and Cavalry,"

⁴²Ibid., 291.

⁴³Tancred's plans to revivify Asia assume that its cultures have "decayed." This issue is outside the scope of the chapter, but it is discussed in studies on orientalism.

⁴⁴Disraeli, Tancred, 309.

but also indicates a return to a more barbaric state. The Angel stresses that only eternal Arabian principles have "controlled the barbarian vigor" and can "cope with morbid civilisation."⁴⁵ In fact, the entire history of empire is tied to the spread of these principles since the great "Ceasars" of the past conquered "barbarians" in order to set "the Laws of Sinai on the throne of the Capitol." They have long functioned "to guide and civilise" the "infinite races that were to spread over the globe."⁴⁶ The figure of Christ has exerted control over the masses of Europe as "the subduing symbol of the last development of Arabian principles."⁴⁷ In this way, religion imposes order on anarchy and fosters the development of civilization, so that the waning of its influence implies the regression of English society into a "barbarous" state. The spread of the "Arabian principles" not only provides this new empire with a set of unifying principles but also assures the social control fostered by "civilization," thus helping to maintain political stability.

Disraeli is not alone in attributing a civilizing influence to the spread of religious principles, or the growth of religious institutions. Samuel Taylor Coleridge describes the Church of England as providing a similar function in "On the Constitution of Church and State" (1830):

⁴⁵Ibid., 291.

⁴⁶Ibid., 290.

⁴⁷Ibid.

That to every parish throughout the kingdom there is transplanted a germ of civilisation; that in the remotest villages there is a nucleus, round which the capabilities of the place may crystallize and brighten; a model sufficiently superior...to encourage and facilitate, imitation; this unobtrusive, continuous agency of a Protestant Church Establishment, this it is, which the patriot, and the philanthropist...cannot estimate at too high a price....⁴⁸

The "Protestant Church Establishment" as "a germ of civilisation" contributes both to the moral development of the people, and to the growth of English culture and social values. It suggests that any threat to the stability of the "Church Establishment" endangers its civilizing influence. Coleridge also appeals to "the patriot and the philanthropist" in order to further his argument for the Church as a stabilizing force or "nucleus" for the development of English social values in remote areas. In this way, the Church may take on a political function by helping to unify the nation and to maintain its institutions. The Angel of Arabia observes that the removal of such an influence will allow the "barbarian vigor" to go uncontrolled resulting in both political and spiritual anarchy.

Consequently, it is not surprising to find that one of the arguments against Jewish emancipation draws on this reciprocal relationship between Church and State that helps to maintain political stability. In the 1847 debates over Jewish

⁴⁸Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Kathleen Coburn, vol. 10, On the Constitution of the Church and State (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 75.

emancipation, Henry Goulburn⁴⁹ points out that one of "the benefit[s] of British rule" has been "the propagation of religious truth amongst the millions of heathens whom providence has placed under [our] dominion."⁵⁰ He warns that the relief of Jewish disabilities will indicate to onlookers in distant parts of the empire that Parliament has wavered in its commitment to Christianity:

For years had those engaged in the holy work found those obstacles [inconsistent conduct of some Englishmen] opposed to them....If, then, Parliament now created in the minds of those people an opinion of their own inconsistency, or that they were not sincere in the professions they made, and that they observed no distinction between the faith of the Jew, Hindoo, and Christian, they would weaken the power they were at present acquiring of spreading the doctrines of Christianity amongst those over whom Providence had given them sway.⁵¹

Goulburn also implies that Britain's imperial interests are partially justified by the continuing efforts to "spread the doctrines of Christianity." Jewish emancipation is seen as jeopardizing the "moral" basis of British colonialism, and the "civilizing" influence that the Established Church exercises, that adds to the stability of the empire. Consequently, Disraeli's desire to provide the Angel of Arabia with

⁴⁹Henry Goulburn (1784-1856) held numerous government positions including that of Member of Parliament and Chancellor of the Exchequer for Robert Peel's second cabinet. He opposed both Plunket's Roman Catholic Disability Removal Bill in the 1820's, and later efforts on behalf of Jewish emancipation. DNB s.v. "Goulburn, Henry."

⁵⁰Hansard Parliamentary Debates, col. 1319.

⁵¹Ibid., cols. 1319-20.

religious principles that "widen the political circle" to include Jews but at the same time, have the potential to "civilize" or control "barbarian vigor" seems an attempt to reconcile attitudes about the role of the Established Church with the admission of Jews to Parliament.

Thus far, this chapter has focussed on Disraeli's use of the novel to formulate a theory of government that creates the illusion of religious conformity by seeming to efface sectarian interests. While the narrative is overtly concerned with resolving conflicts in Christian England and in the divided Syria, it also repeatedly draws attention to the treatment of Jews in nineteenth-century society. The discussions between Tancred and Fakredeen that explore the difficulties of governing diverse racial and religious groups form a framework for Disraeli's consideration of the Jewish Question. The second half of the chapter will situate the Jewish Question within this framework by arguing that Tancred attempts to reconcile the issue of Jewish emancipation with the conception of England as an unified Christian nation. The novel does this by drawing attention to the interconnections between Jewish and Christian history, and to Jewish contributions to Western culture. In this way, Disraeli constructs a narrative that defines the relationship between Jews and Christians in terms of similarities, thus minimizing any challenge that Jewish distinctiveness may pose to the accepted tenets of Christianity, or to the vision of national

identity based on religious conformity.

Disraeli fashions the religious identity of Jews in terms of Christian history, rather than in relationship to the growth and development of Judaism in order to facilitate his argument for Jewish emancipation. Although debates over Jewish disabilities frequently compare Judaism to Christianity, Disraeli's work is characterized not only by references to theological issues but also by those to racial identity. Tancred's first meeting with Eva, the beautiful Jewess, provides a narrative of Jewish-Christian relations that emphasizes Christianity's ties to the history of the Jewish race. Once Eva learns that Tancred is a Christian, she acknowledges both her Jewishness, and that of Christ. Her remark to Tancred indicates that Christ's Jewish origins should engender her sympathy: "'It sometimes seems to me that I ought [worship Christ]...for I am of his race, and you should sympathise with your race.'" ⁵² She also notes that even the biblical accounts of his life are the product of Jewish writers:

I have read [Bible]. The English bishop here has given me the book. It is a good one, written, I observe, entirely by Jews. ⁵³

Her assessment of the relationship between these religions promises to be equally disquieting to the Jew and the Christian. First, her comments imply that Jews who

⁵²Disraeli, Tancred, 189.

⁵³Ibid., 189.

acknowledge both the Jewishness of Christ and the authors of the Bible may be on the verge of conversion, since they "should sympathize" with members of their race. Secondly, her practice of drawing attention to Christ's Jewishness emphasizes his ties to a specific race and culture. Eva's comments challenge those nineteenth-century readers who characterize Christianity as an "universal" religion by insisting that it cannot be easily purged of its Semitic origins.

Tancred assumes that Eva's "sympathy" towards Christ and her knowledge of Christianity are indicative of conversion. He performs a "rhetorical baptism" of sorts by proclaiming Eva "already half a Christian."⁵⁴ Like English politicians who effaced differences between Anglicans, Dissenters, and Catholics in order to unite them under the auspices of a "Christian Parliament," Tancred ignores historical and theological differences that have shaped these religions in favor of this rhetorical transformation. The issue of Jewish emancipation can also be easily resolved since the "Christianized" Jew offers no challenge to this conception of Parliament. Many Christians made the assumption that by removing disabilities, Jews would be convinced of the

⁵⁴It is important to point out that Disraeli does not seem to be purposely advocating Jewish conversion in this novel, though this section seems to imply that idea. However, in Lord George Bentinck (1851), he encourages Jews to recognize the other half of their religion and describes Christianity as completed Judaism.

charitable nature of Christianity and convert. During the Parliamentary debates of 1847, Sir Harvey Verney argues in favor of extending full civil rights to British Jews for exactly this reason:⁵⁵ "Such an individual would obtain an impression of the charitable and comprehensive spirit of our religion that must attract him toward it."⁵⁶

However, the novel resists conversion as a simple solution to the Jewish Question by depicting Eva's rejection of her "rhetorical baptism." Christianity seems to be riddled with contradictions and inconsistencies that she believes Judaism avoids because of its enduring religious traditions. She informs Tancred that "'the Christianity which I draw from your book does not agree with the Christianity which you practise,'" thereby highlighting the difference between ritual practice and the Gospels.⁵⁷ When he urges her to use the "Christian Church" as her guide, Eva seems only more confused:

Which?...there are so many in Jerusalem. There is the good bishop...there is the Latin Church...there is the Armenian Church...and there are the Greek, the Maronite, and the Coptic Churches....In this perplexity it maybe wise to remain within the pale of a Church older than all of them, for he was born a Jew, lived a Jew, and died a

⁵⁵Sir Harry Verney (1801-1894) was a liberal politician who served in Parliament for over fifty years. He actively promoted social reforms by supporting factory legislation, the abolition of university tests, and the removal of Jewish disabilities. He had strong ties to the evangelical movement as evidenced by his membership in the Bible Society, Church Mission Society, and the Evangelical Alliance. DNB s.v. "Verney, Sir Harry."

⁵⁶Hansard Parliamentary Debates, col. 1377.

⁵⁷Disraeli, Tancred, 189.

Jew....⁵⁸

Eva's comments here echo Tancred's earlier frustration with the "anarchy of creeds" that he sees as characterizing English religious life. Just as Tancred retraces the route to Sinai, Eva pledges her allegiance to "a church older than all of them," or Judaism. Her preference for the stability of the Jewish religious traditions reinforces the idea that Christianity may benefit by looking to "Sinai" once more. In this passage, Disraeli alludes to an argument commonly made by both Jews and Christians about the failure of widespread conversion. The "sectarian" interests of Christians make their religion unattractive because there seems to be no consensus about what constitutes religious truth. This perspective also ignores the cultural and historical influences that have shaped Jewish practices by emphasizing static ties to tradition.

This scene in the Garden of Bethany indicates that debates over religious history often functioned as discussions about the relationship between the Established Church and the State. Sir Inglis argues that the morality of the nation would be jeopardized if the Jews were to hold parliamentary offices:⁵⁹

⁵⁸Ibid., 189-190.

⁵⁹Sir Robert Harry Inglis (1786-1855) worked as the director of the East India Company and from 1829 to his retirement, served as a parliamentary representative for Oxford University. He opposed the removal of Catholic and Jewish disabilities. Inglis was "an old-fashioned Tory" and

Jew legislation in these walls will be a new argument for the separation of Church and State...you are admitting to legislate for the Church of Christ here established one who not only is not a member of that Church...but one who disbelieves in the very Christ on whom that Church is founded....⁶⁰

In this case, the Jewish failure to recognize Christ as the Messiah is significant only because it will foster "a new argument for the separation of Church and State." Since the Church and State function in consort "to superintend and control public action," the stability of English institutions and social hierarchy is threatened by Jewish emancipation. Mr. Newdegate warned the legislature that the relief of Jewish disabilities would result in anarchy because the State could no longer draw on Christianity to bolster its authority:⁶¹

Christianity had hitherto been the foundation of the law's authority; but if we removed this character from the laws, we could not claim from the people the same reverence for them as before. Obedience to the law would come to be a question simply of might, not of right.⁶²

Inadvertently linked with religious indifference, Jewish emancipation became indicative of the forces that produced the French revolution, and worked to undermine the authority of

"a strong Churchman" whose sentiments were those of the country gentleman. DBN s.v. "Inglis, Sir Robert Harry."

⁶⁰Hansard Parliamentary Debates, col. 1265.

⁶¹Charles Newdegate (1816-1887) served as a conservative member of Parliament for North Warwickshire from 1843 to 1885. His hostility towards Roman Catholics strongly influenced his politics. He also published various essays on trade and custom tariffs. DNB s.v. "Newdegate, Charles Newdigate."

⁶²Hansard Parliamentary Debates, col. 1370.

the upper classes, including members of Parliament.⁶³ These kinds of arguments protect the English reputation for liberality and toleration, since the refusal to allow Jews access to high political office could be characterized as a result of moral conviction grounded in a concern for Christianity.

While this scene between Tancred and Eva has long been identified as a prelude to Disraeli's Parliamentary speech on Jewish emancipation, little consideration has been given to his tendency to blur the distinction between the fictive world of the novel and the reality of the later political debate.⁶⁴ His Parliamentary address reiterates many of the same arguments made in the novel of which his listeners may have been well aware. It is important to point out here that by the end of this scene in the Garden of Bethany Tancred, rather than Eva, is a "convert" of sorts.⁶⁵ Deeply moved by her account of Jewish persecution, the English Lord declares, "'I am no persecutor...and had I been so, my visit to Bethany

⁶³Pinsker, 60.

⁶⁴Disraeli's speech was given in the House of Commons during December 1874, while the novel was published that previous March. It was not as successful as Coningsby (1844) or Sybil (1845), but it managed to draw the attention of the reading public and was even reviewed in the widely circulating London Times. Braun, 119.

⁶⁵Ragussis makes a similar point when he describes Tancred "as an Englishman who seems to rewrite his ancestry as if he were a Jew, or desired to be a Jew." Michael Ragussis, Figures of Conversion (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 198.

would have cleansed my heart of such dark thoughts.'"⁶⁶ Tancred will rectify the actions of his medieval ancestor by refusing to perpetuate his prejudices. As the subtitle of the novel suggests, he is a member of the "New Crusade," a young English Christian who has been "cleansed" of his "dark thoughts" about Jews.

In this way, allusions to the novel in his parliamentary address function to extend Tancred's "New Crusade." Disraeli specifically draws attention to the medieval character of the "darkest superstitions" that persist in the mind of the English public:

But you are influenced by the darkest superstitions of the darkest ages that ever existed in this country. It is this feeling that has been kept out of this debate; indeed, that has been kept secret in yourselves--enlightened as you are--and that is unknowingly influencing you as it is influencing others abroad....yet it is that dark calumny of the feudal times, founded on gross misrepresentations of history, geography, and theology, which is the origin of the prejudice against the ancient faith.⁶⁷

Like Tancred's crusade, his speech is to act as a corrective to these medieval prejudices by recognizing that "this feeling has been kept out of this debate." Disraeli, the member of Parliament, seems to follow Tancred's lead because though he is a Christian, he too will champion the Jewish cause: "Yes, it is as a Christian that I will not take upon me the awful responsibility of excluding from the Legislature those who are

⁶⁶Disraeli, Tancred, 196.

⁶⁷Hansard Parliamentary Debates, cols. 1329-30.

of the religion in the bosom of which my Lord and Saviour was born."⁶⁸

In doing so, he reiterates the lessons that Eva taught Tancred in the Garden of Bethany by acknowledging the Jewishness of Christ, and by arguing for the "affinity" between Judaism and Christianity. Not only does Disraeli claim that "every Gentleman [in Parliament] does profess the Jewish religion, and believes in Moses and the Prophets,"⁶⁹ but he also argues that Jewish morality underwrites English institutions. The Church forms the morals of society by acquainting Christians with Jewish history, heroes, and literature, and "the tables of Jewish law" decorate church buildings and altars.⁷⁰ Just as Eva defers to the "older church," Disraeli forces his audience to consider the Semitic origins of Christianity:

The very reason for admitting the Jews is because they can show so near an affinity to you. Where is your Christianity, if you do not believe in their Judaism?⁷¹

While Disraeli's oversimplifies both the theological and the historical development of Christianity and Judaism, he is able to make a case for Jewish emancipation without endorsing religious liberty. This distinction is especially important since as a growing colonial power England has acquired other

⁶⁸Ibid., col. 1330.

⁶⁹Ibid., col. 1325.

⁷⁰Ibid., col. 1328.

⁷¹Ibid., col. 1325.

non-Christian subjects. By recognizing Jewish rights on the base of "religious affinity," England would not necessarily be compelled to grant the same consideration to other groups:

But the best evidence in the face of Europe of our Christian sincerity is, that we admit the Jews to the highest privileges of citizenship...without so admitting the professors of other religions. The very reason for admitting the Jews is because they can show so near an affinity to you....Do not mix up, then, the consideration of a question which is so intimately allied to your own faith, with the different considerations that would apply to the Pagan and the Mahomedan.⁷²

Such an approach to emancipation presents no danger to the work of English missionaries who in teaching Christian doctrines are also "civilizing" the colonies. Consequently, the hierarchy of religions remains unchallenged, and England can continue to take advantage of the political stability that the spread of Christianity indirectly fosters.

In addition, this argument for Jewish emancipation on the basis of "religious affinities" also allows Disraeli to maintain his support for a theory of government rooted in religious conformity. Disraeli bases his argument on his understanding of "religious truth," but he is well-acquainted with the "blessing" of conformity:

I am satisfied that a great body of Gentlemen in this House will allow their opinion...to be decided by their belief in the principle of religious liberty. But I may say, for myself, that I am one of those who believe that there is something more excellent than religious liberty --and that more excellent thing is religious truth. I may be permitted to say, also, that religious conformity --religious truth taking the shape of religious conformity--is in my mind unquestionably a very great

⁷²Ibid., col. 1325.

blessing....⁷³

His Parliamentary address suggests that "religious truth" and "religious conformity" are equally compatible. Since Disraeli sees Jewish religion, history, and literature as an integral part of Christianity, Jewish emancipation is simply the recognition of a "religious truth" rather than a challenge to "conformity." This narrative of religious history allows Disraeli to claim that the "Christian Parliament" is inclusive of Jews, and to avoid any consideration of Jewish distinctiveness that may undercut this assumption. While Disraeli's speech is sometimes considered a fine example of political expediency, it is indicative of a recurrent pattern in the negotiation of Anglo-Jewish identity: the repeated attempt by Anglo-Jews to demonstrate that the "religious truth" of Judaism is both consonant with and of equal significance to that of Christianity.

Although Tancred attempts to demonstrate Judaism's compatibility with Christianity, it does not advocate the abandonment of Jewish distinctiveness.⁷⁴ Tancred's servant, Baroni, narrates the story of his family's life as traveling performers to illustrate this point. The children in the family are especially skilled at representing scenes from the crucifixion, and portraying such figures as the Virgin, Mary

⁷³Ibid., col. 1322.

⁷⁴In Lord George Bentinck (1852), Disraeli advocates conversion but also racial distinctiveness as a way to avoid the 'disappearance' of the Jewish people.

Magdalene, and the Apostles. On one occasion, Sidonia happens to see the children perform a series of their "tableaux," and offers to provide financial assistance for their artistic training. The children become outstanding artists known throughout Europe for their talents in a variety of different fields. Baroni concludes his narrative by revealing his well-kept secret: his family is Jewish. When Tancred observes that their surname appears to be "Italian," Baroni corrects him by explaining that his family is "pure Sephardim in nature and in name":

Good Arabic, my lord. Baroni; that is, the son of Aaron; the name of old clothesmen in London, and of caliphs at Bagdad.⁷⁵

Sidonia immediately recognized the family's origins, and felt compelled to offer the children opportunities that they would otherwise never have.

Furthermore, Baroni emphasizes the family's Jewishness suggesting the desire to reclaim that heritage which is obscured by his "Italian" surname. The children's representations of Christianity work to efface their Jewish distinctiveness so that they can survive in a predominantly Christian environment. They function like Marrano Jews who in order to avoid persecution practiced Christianity, while secretly retaining their Jewish faith. As a Jew himself, Sidonia sees past the children's 'imitation' of Christian figures and frees them from the burden of their dual existence

⁷⁵Disraeli, Tancred, 336.

so that they can develop their own talents. Baroni also reclaims his Jewishness since his narrative allows him to cast aside the guise of an "Italian Catholic," and reveal his true identity to Tancred. In this way, the story of the Baroni family illustrates how Jews must be allowed to move beyond the confines of Christian tradition in order to fully contribute to the enrichment of Western culture. Rather than advocating the abandonment of Jewish distinctiveness for an universal ideal, Disraeli suggests that it is the freedom to embrace this identity that allows for the growth and development of the individual.⁷⁶

The struggles of the Baroni children also participate in the larger debate over the role of the Jew in the development of Western culture. The Jewish role in this process is questioned because of the underlying assumption that not only political institutions such as Parliament, but also English culture, are inherently Christian. This assumption is used by some opponents of emancipation, and various others, to argue that the adoption of 'Western' or 'English' manners is indicative of conversion to Christianity and the abandonment of Judaism. For example, a review of Tancred appearing in The London Times reveals more about such attitudes towards Jewish

⁷⁶The novel provides several examples of how social prejudices not only limit the development of Jewish identity but also deform it. Eva's father, Besso, feels he repulses Christians because he is a "Jew banker," and Eva herself comments on "the seal of ignominy" that comes to distort the faces of Jewish children. Disraeli, Tancred 398-9.

acculturation than the literary merit of the novel:

at the very moment Mr. Disraeli makes us acquainted with the necessity of changing our western garments for eastern, and of removing Christian customs in order to make way for the Judaic. Eastern nations are actually nationalizing our ideas, and the Jewish people are eagerly adapting themselves to Christian usages and manners.⁷⁷

The Jew is not identified as adapting "English" customs but "Christians usages and manners," so that he "has grown less a Jew and more an Englishman." By desiring a more active role in English society, the Jews are moving toward imminent conversion:

In seeking a real home amongst the Gentiles, and in obtaining it, the Jew has suffered the foundation of his faith to be riven, and has opened an easier passage for his offspring from the Old Testament to the New.⁷⁸

Jews affirm the "decay" of their religion by adopting English cultural practices since "civilization" has as its underlying value system that of Christianity. The Times reviewer denies the possibility of a distinctively "Jewish" contribution to English culture and the viability of Judaism as an institution in English society, since such participation is an endorsement of Christianity.

Although less widely circulated than The London Times, the Voice of Jacob highlights several themes that are characteristic of debates over Anglo-Jewish identity in the nineteenth century. First, there is an attempt to distinguish

⁷⁷Review of Tancred, by Benjamin Disraeli, The London Times, 2 April 1847, p. 5.

⁷⁸Ibid., 5.

cultural or European practices from religious or Christian ones. The Orthodox rabbi who writes for the Voice of Jacob defines "manners" as secular, thus separated from the immediate influence of religion. He criticizes the reviewer in The London Times for "fall[ing] into the common error of the mass of public writers, and confound[ing] polished, or perhaps better European manners and usages with those of the Christians."⁷⁹ The classics are found to be especially influential on the development of Western "manners":

If our present usages and manners are the product of our civilisation, and this the result of our feelings...then are our usages and manners rather Heathen than otherwise....For how does the man of education among the civilised nations of Europe obtain the stock of notions which are to guide him through life?⁸⁰

The "unparalleled degree of civilisation" found among the Teutonic races cannot be solely the product of Christianity. Instead, the English obtain their "stock of notions" through the study of Greek and Roman classics which formed the foundation of public school education. The classics will eventually be used to undermine the significance of Jewish contributions to English culture later in the century, but in 1847, the rabbi uses them to identify "secular" areas of English life that are not necessarily the products of Christian or Jewish influence.

Secondly, the Voice of Jacob also makes use of religious

⁷⁹"Judaism and the Reviewer of 'Tancred' in the 'Times,'" The Voice of Jacob, n.s., 23 April 1847, p. 125.

⁸⁰Ibid.

history in order to demonstrate how Jews have influenced the development of English culture either directly, or through the mediating role of Christianity. The argument here assumes that if manners do have a "real moral nature," it must be derived from a moral code common to both Judaism and Christianity. Like Disraeli, the rabbi focusses the reader's attention on the Semitic origins of Christianity in order to stress the "affinity" between the two religions. Since English manners can be considered as derived from a Jewish moral code or as purely secular in nature, the adoption of "polished manners," or English social conventions poses no threat to Jewish religious beliefs. Their adoption can also be distinguished from conversion, so that the Jew may cultivate both "Englishness" and "Jewishness" because they are separate but not inherently contradictory attributes.

While the Jews may adopt English manners, it is by maintaining Jewish distinctiveness that they will make their most significant contributions to English society. The Voice of Jacob argues that Jews have a moral obligation to retain their religious distinctiveness:

Where...has it ever been said that a Jew should be so secluded as not to take part in the moral, intellectual, and social progress of mankind? Is it because the Jew was to be distinguished by a certain peculiarity in his garb, and by the observance of certain dietary laws or festivals? Were an inquiry on this subject not to lead us too far from our ground, we think it could be proved that these very distinctions were intended to excite the attention of the Gentile world--were to induce it to inquire into the heavenly tenets of Israel, and thus be

saved.⁸¹

In this instance, the rabbi places emphasis on the present and future role of the Jew in the moral development of England. The Jewish role in history is not played out, since "the Gentile world" has yet to comprehend "the heavenly tenets of Israel." Those Anglo-Jews who were concerned with religiosity actively debate over the Jewish mission in English society. As the following chapters will show, their discussions illustrate that as the century progressed Jewish intellectuals were concerned not only with defending Judaism, but also with its ability to strengthen the religious and moral conviction of all English citizens.

In addition, Tancred becomes embroiled in the debates over the influence of the classics and Jewish morality on the development of Western culture. While Matthew Arnold will later attempt to balance the "Hellenic" and the "Hebraic," Disraeli portrays them as competing forces that seem to be unreconcilable.⁸² His account of this struggle for cultural

⁸¹Ibid., 126.

⁸²The later chapters on Matthew Arnold's work will discuss the issue of Hellenism in greater detail. However, it is important to point out here that the revival of Hellenism served several ideological functions. By emphasizing training in the Classics, the public schools were able to produce an intellectually elite class that would filter into positions of political power. In addition, it also allowed for debates over contemporary issues to be conducted under the guise of classicism thus avoiding overt controversy. "The beauty, intensity, seriousness, and antiquity of Greek religion reflected qualities that Victorians wished to attach to their own religious life." See Frank M. Turner, "Why the Greeks and not the Romans in Victorian Britain?" in Rediscovering

dominance takes the form of a love triangle in which Tancred plays a pivotal role. Fakredeem persuades Tancred to accompany him on a visit to the Anzarey, a secluded mountain people, who continue to worship ancient Greek gods. Their visit is prompted by Fakredeem's desire to have the Anzarey Queen, Astarte, as a political ally when he begins his campaign to unite Syria. Astarte immediately becomes enamored of Tancred and in a jealous fit, tries to put her rival, Eva, to death. Forced to choose between the two, Tancred rescues the Hebraic Eva and they both escape from the Hellenic Astarte.

Disraeli politicizes this struggle between the Hebraic and Hellenic when Fakredeem unveils his strategy for uniting Syria. The young prince immediately recognizes that the Hellenic ideals have political uses that could further his efforts to regain his kingdom. Fakredeem's assumption of political power is intimately connected to the dominance of Hellenism because he desires to establish a "Gentile dynasty":

If religion were to cure the world, suppose they tried this ancient and once popular faith, so very popular in Syria....Asian supremacy, cosmopolitan regeneration, and theocratic equality, all gradually disappeared. An independent Syrian kingdom...rose up before him; an established Olympian religion, which the Druses...would embrace, and toleration for the Maronites till he could bribe Bishop Nicodemus to arrange a general conformity....The Jews might remain, provided they negotiated a loan which should consolidate the Olympian institutions and establish the Gentile dynasty of

Fakredeem and Astarte.⁸³

This universal worship of the Greek gods will resolve Fakredeem's political problems by establishing religious conformity once again. However, the Jews will not be considered members of this "Gentile Dynasty," but will be tolerated as long as they perform financial transactions. Since the Jews do not participate in the "general conformity," they are barred from any access to "Olympian institutions" that will form the framework of this new society. Fakredeem is prevented from carrying out his plans, but his political vision suggests that the "Hellenic" works to exclude the Jew from positions of institutional power.

Not only does Tancred rescue Eva and frustrate Fakredeem's plans, but in doing so, this aristocratic Christian also chooses the "Hebraic" over the "Hellenic." This choice again aligns the Jew with Western culture suggesting that both individual Jews like the Baroni children as well as moral and theological concepts drawn from Hebrew tradition contribute to its development. When Tancred visits the gardens of the Anzarey, he admires the statues of the Olympian gods and acknowledges the role of the Hellenic in his education. Yet, he displaces the primacy of Hellenism in the spread of religious truth by describing how the "Hebrew" exerts its influence through Christ:

Jesus was...the descendant of King David as well as the

⁸³Disraeli, Tancred, 433.

son of God. But through this last and greatest of their princes it was ordained that the inspired Hebrew mind should mould and govern the world.⁸⁴

The "Hebrew mind" has also vanquished the would be followers of the Greek religion:

But what are their conquests to those of Jesus Christ?...Their descendants, both Greek and Roman, bow before the altars of the house of David. The house of David is worshipped at Rome itself, at every seat of great and growing empire in the world at London....⁸⁵

This English aristocrat resists not only Astarte's romantic advances, but also the intellectual temptation of allowing "the fair and famous images" of the Olympian gods to displace "religious truth."

In this way, the novel challenges the revival of Hellenism and its ideological implications for both intellectual pursuits and the figuration of Christianity. Disraeli demonstrates how the influence of Christianity far outweighs that of Hellenic religion. This argument itself does little to further the inclusion of Jewish or "Hebrew" influences in the development of Western culture. However, Disraeli attempts to establish this connection when Tancred proclaims, "Christianity is Judaism for the multitudes, and its development was the death-blow of Pagan idolatry."⁸⁶ He not only refuses to allow the efforts of the intellectual elite to use the classics to usurp the Bible, but he also

⁸⁴Ibid., 426-7.

⁸⁵Ibid., 428.

⁸⁶Ibid., 427.

refuses to permit Christianity to be purged of its Semitic origins. Critics frequently use this passage to demonstrate Disraeli's hostility towards Judaism or his ignorance of the difference between it and Christianity. This practice seems to overlook the ideological implications that such a statement may have had for the nineteenth-century reader advocating the exclusion of Jews from a "Christian Parliament" and justifying such political action by distancing Christianity from its ties to Jewish history. As in his parliamentary speech, Disraeli's arguments fail to address the unique developments of Christianity and Judaism in the course of religious history, but nonetheless they force the observer to recognise the Jewish presence in history as well as in nineteenth-century thought and religion.

Disraeli furthers this effort by describing Tancred's meditations on the relationship between Hebrew history and English political institutions. In an attempt to justify his trip to the East, Tancred recounts the ways that "the Hebrew race" has provided the momentum for some of the nation's most significant political advances:

Vast as the obligations of the whole human family are to the Hebrew race, there is no portion of the modern population so much indebted to them as the British people. It was 'the sword of the Lord of Gideon' that won the boast of liberties of England; chanting canticles that cheered the heart of Judah...the Scotch...achieved their religious freedom.⁸⁷

Hebrew history has served as the animating principle for the

⁸⁷Ibid., 266.

"pursuit of public liberty" and the achievement of "religious freedom." Rather than see the Jews as alien to British institutions, Tancred's narrative identifies them as pivotal to the nation's development. He attributes the very stability of these institutions to the Laws of Sinai:

The life and property of England are protected by the laws of Sinai. The hard-working people of England are secured in every seven days a day of rest by the laws of Sinai.⁸⁸

These principles benefit landowners since they foster the respect for property and help to maintain a stable government that reinforces the class structure. They also help placate the working classes by providing respite from the ten hour work day so common in 1847.⁸⁹ Nineteenth-century Jews are the contemporary representatives of these ancient Hebrews whose laws both raise the moral tone and provide added stability to England's political institutions.

Tancred is indirectly outlining an argument for Jewish emancipation as he muses on the interconnections between British and Hebrew history. Since Jews have had a pivotal role in the formation of political life, their continued persecution seems unjustifiable:

And yet they persecute the Jews, and hold up to odium the race to whom they are indebted for the sublime

⁸⁸Ibid., 265.

⁸⁹This issue may have been more politically charged in 1847 than Tancred's comments immediately suggest, because work hours were being challenged as inhumane. A series of bills such the factory acts of 1844 and 1847 were passed to limit working hours.

legislation which alleviates the inevitable lot of the labouring multitude!⁹⁰

Disraeli does not argue for emancipation on the basis of public liberty, but rather emphasizes the sense of gratitude that the British public should feel towards the Jews. Their continued persecution seems to be indicative of the government's moral failing, which prompted Tancred's trip to the East. When Lionel von Rothschild finally does become the first professing Jew in Parliament, The Spectator also sees the event as "not of such large bearing in a purely political sense...but morally of the greatest importance."⁹¹ Jewish emancipation has a restorative effect on English politics that seems to parallel Tancred's desire for renewed principles:

The recognition of their rights, therefore, has removed a stain on the equity and fairness of England, it has restored in some degree to a higher political standard....⁹²

In fact, the ending of the novel implies that the Jewish Question will be symbolically resolved with the marital union of Tancred and Eva. Tancred confesses his love by telling Eva that she is "the Angel of Arabia, and of my life and Spirit!." Overcome by this declaration she swoons in his arms unable to answer him. Tancred's embrace of Eva is not simply that of a lover, but also of the finest qualities of "Englishness"

⁹⁰Disraeli, Tancred, 265.

⁹¹"The Modern Guy Fawkes," The Spectator 31 (July 1858): 806.

⁹²Ibid.

embracing those of "Jewishness." However, Disraeli leaves the reader to decide the fate of these lovers, since Eva faints before she can reply. Levine argues that the reader may be assured that the couple eventually marries:

On the simplest symbolic level, we find in this story the union between West and East represented by the love and assumed later marriage between Tancred and Eva. Disraeli employs this same symbolic formula in each of the three novels; aristocracy and trade have been joined in Coningsby...and New Toryism and the people in Sybil....⁹³

Their union will usher in a new universal order that offers a resolution to the underlying spiritual tensions in the novel. It also seems to suggest an end to a more immediate political tensions, since the scene could be interpreted as Christian England's embrace of her Jewish citizens.

However, these readings fail to consider the disillusionment that underwrites the scene, and even prompts Tancred's declaration of love. Tancred has earlier informed Eva that he will no longer pursue his crusade nor will he return to England. The final scene in the novel suggests that Eva attributes this disillusionment to the "spiritual decay" of the East:

Your feelings cannot be what they were before all this happened; when you thought only of a divine cause, of stars, of angels, and of our peculiar and gifted land. No, no; now it is all mixed up with intrigue, and politics, and management, and baffled schemes, and cunning arts of men. You may be, you are, free from all this, but your faith is not the same. You no longer

⁹³Levine, 123.

believe in Arabia.⁹⁴

Like England, the East also contributes to the erosion of Tancred's faith, because it has fallen victim to political intrigues, and no longer fosters the development of great animating principles. Tancred protests Eva's diagnosis by declaring his faith in her, but this too is met with disillusionment. Before she faints in his arms, Eva urges Tancred to abandon her and any such hopes of marriage:

There are those to whom I belong; and to whom you belong. 'Yes,' she said, trying to withdraw her hand. "Fly, Fly from me, son of Europe and of Christ."⁹⁵

Social, religious, and racial differences are already at work undermining their union, just as political intrigue has compromised Tancred's hopes for Arabia.

Moreover, the arrival of Tancred's parents demonstrates how social and political realities will encroach on the union of the lovers. Their presence suggests the perpetuation of the Western power structures in the East, and indicates the spread of further political corruption and spiritual decay. Even The London Times recognizes that the "inveterate exclusiveness of the lands beyond the Mediterranean is melting hourly before the influences of the indomitable west" resulting in the "gradual destruction of national identity."⁹⁶ The novel provides numerous examples of this

⁹⁴Disraeli, Tancred, 485.

⁹⁵Ibid., 485-6.

⁹⁶Review of Tancred, The London Times, 5.

process such as the behavior of Tancred's servants, Trueman and Freeman, whose snobbery perpetuates English social hierarchies. Even the political intrigues of Fakredeen are prompted by Western intervention in Eastern politics.

In this way, Tancred's love for Eva will be scrutinized in terms of English social conventions and prejudices. Fakredeen alludes to such a scenario when he attempts to gain Astarte's confidence by discrediting Tancred. He fabricates a story about how the young lord's love for Eva has disgraced him in England:

What I mean by disgrace is, that he is mixed up with transactions, and connected with persons who will damage, cheapen, in a worldly sense dishonor him, destroy all his sources of power and influence....Well, it is perfectly well known...that this enterprise of his, this religious-politico-military adventure, is merely undertaken because he happens to be desperately enamored of a Jewess at Damascus, whom he cannot carry home as his bride.⁹⁷

He further embellishes his story by adding that if Tancred should attempt to return home, he "will be beheaded and [Eva] will be burnt alive."⁹⁸ Fakredeen's account of the lovers' fate should they return to England is grossly exaggerated, but his observation that Tancred's association with Eva "will damage, cheapen, and in a worldly sense dishonor him" characterizes a common response to intermarriage. Fakredeen's conversation with Astarte alludes to social tensions that discourage intermarriage as well as make it nearly impossible

⁹⁷Disraeli, Tancred, 439.

⁹⁸Ibid.

for the ending of Tancred to follow a pattern of marital union found in the other books of the trilogy.

His story also alludes to the complicated social and political reverberations that were the consequence of intermarriage. In the Anglo-Jewish community such marriages were viewed with displeasure because like baptism, they frequently resulted in conversion. Those wishing to escape Jewish disabilities and advance in society found marriage to a non-Jew to be a gradual step toward conversion.⁹⁹ Such "mixed marriages contracted by respectable Jews almost always ended with the apostasy of the Jewish partners or with the eventual baptism of his or her children."¹⁰⁰ The economic success of Jews encouraged Christian parents to approve of such marriages since they frequently resulted in monetary gain. Conversion of the non-Jewish partner was rare among the upper classes, while it occasionally occurred among the lower classes, since social standing was not always a major consideration.¹⁰¹ In general, feelings of communal solidarity prevented Anglo-Jews from intermarrying, and even those only minimally observant maintained ties to the community by serving in its organizations.¹⁰²

Christians expressed the view that not only would

⁹⁹Endelman, 257.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 269.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 269.

¹⁰²Endelman, Radical Assimilation, 81.

intermarriage end in conversion, but it would also further the integration of the Jew into English society.¹⁰³ Even among sympathetic observers, there existed the hope that Anglo-Jews would one day find such unions acceptable. William Fremantle expressed such a desire when he described how intermarriage would function as a step towards the inclusion of Jews in "the universal brotherhood of the Christian Church":

We can conceive, therefore, of a Jewish community in future times...accepting the name of Christian...yet regarding Christianity as the completion of the religion of their fathers; not prohibiting intermarriage, yet wishing as a rule to preserve the distinctiveness of their race; accepting the full breadth of Christian morality.¹⁰⁴

His argument attempts to recognize Jewish distinctiveness but it is hard to separate it and intermarriage from the adoption of Christianity. Those less sympathetic to the Jewish reluctance to intermarry see it as proof of their "alien" origins, and their inability to fulfill the duties of citizenship. Goldwin Smith argued that "it would be difficult to name anything more destructive of those relations with the rest of the community on which patriotism depends than the refusal of intermarriage."¹⁰⁵ Intermarriage is a proof of patriotism because it helps to promote national unity. It

¹⁰³Christian responses to intermarriage are given further consideration in Chapter Eleven which discusses the marriage of Daniel Deronda.

¹⁰⁴W[illiam] H[enry] Fremantle, "The Future of Judaism," The Contemporary Review 32 (July 1878): 789.

¹⁰⁵Goldwin Smith, "Can Jews Be Patriots?" The Nineteenth Century 3 (May 1878): 887.

also functions to "absorb" the Jew into the general population just as conversion "absorbs" the Jew into Christianity. According to this perspective, the marriage of Tancred and Eva is inadequate for the figuration of the relationship between the citizen and the state, because it seems to obscure rather than protect individual differences.

Throughout the novel, Disraeli has affirmed the political advantages gained by some form of religious conformity and has repeatedly identified the Jews with English social practices and institutions. Tancred shares with Alroy the assumption that political stability is maintained by the unifying influences of a national religion. In the former work, Disraeli attempts to define that national religion in the broadest possible terms by equating it with the Angel's message of "the theocratic equality." He 'widens the political circle' so that it can contain all sectarian groups and in this way, minimizes plurality by creating an allusion of an unified empire. This vision of national unity also underwrites his argument for Jewish emancipation. The novel illustrates how Jews can be contained within English political, social, and even theological institutions, because their history and religion are shown to be constitutive of them. According to this perspective, Jewish emancipation and integration into nineteenth-century England will not necessarily be the result of a society that has grown more tolerant of racial and religious plurality, but will come

about because the public has learned to identify Jewishness with Englishness.

The history of the emancipation movement itself illustrates the limits of tolerance with regards to the Jewish Question. Throughout the 1840s and 1850s, both petitions and speeches in favor of Jewish emancipation kept the issue before the public, and as Jews continued to be elected to local political offices, it became more difficult to explain their exclusion from Parliament. However, Lionel von Rothschild was only permitted to take his seat in 1858, when a breach between the House of Commons and Lords seemed imminent. A compromise was reached between the Houses that allowed the admission of professing Jews by special resolution. The Jewish Chronicle characterized this law as "both a danger and a humiliation to the Jew," because it did not grant Jewish subjects rights equal to "every other British subject," and because it was subject to the whim of political opinion.¹⁰⁶ This resistance to the removal of Jewish disabilities not only functioned to keep the government in the hands of Christian Englishmen, but it also influenced the fashioning of Anglo-Jewish identity. Jews continued to be burdened with the necessity of demonstrating how Jewishness was commensurate with Englishness, so that they would not be perceived as challenging English institutions with their desire to remain

¹⁰⁶"Admission of Jews to Parliament," The Jewish Chronicle, 4 August 1865, p. 4.

a distinct group. Tancred demonstrates as well as participates in this process because it endorses a vision of national unity based on religious conformity, and because it also relentlessly identifies Jewishness with Englishness to make its case for emancipation.

CHAPTER V

HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTOR AND THE JEWS' FREE SCHOOL: ARNOLD AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF INSTITUTIONAL POWER

In his edition of the Complete Prose Works, R. H. Super includes Matthew Arnold's brief address given at the Jews' Free School Banquet on May 21, 1884, along with a number of other miscellaneous pieces.¹ While this was a minor speaking engagement in Arnold's literary career, newspaper coverage of the festival dinner held at the Criterion suggests that it was a major event for the Jewish community. The Jewish Chronicle not only provides an account of the banquet held to raise additional funds for the school but it also "issued a SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT of FOUR PAGES containing a Full Report of the important speakers at the Jews' Free School Dinner on Wednesday Evening."² Arnold's name appears in capital letters along side such notables as Mr. Mundella, the Minister of

¹Matthew Arnold, Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1960-1977), vol. 10, Philistinism in England and America, 245-6.

²Capitalization in this and all other similar quotations is The Jewish Chronicle's. "The Jews' Free School Banquet," The Jewish Chronicle, 23 May 1884, p. 9.

Education,³ and Lord Randolph Churchill, Member of Parliament.⁴ The appearance of Arnold's name along with these government officials not only indicates his ties to institutional power, but also the complexity of his ties to the Jewish community.

The Jewish Chronicle's account of the traditional toasts at the banquet provides additional insight into the complex cultural matrix that links Arnold, the school, and Jewish support of English institutions. The toasts emphasized the Jewish community's loyalty to the monarchy by offering tribute to the Queen and other members of the royal family. In fact, the chairman, Mr. Mundella, noted "that within the wide domains of Her Majesty's empire, there are not more loyal subjects than the members of the community gathered together within these walls."⁵ Jewish patriotism was further highlighted with a salute to "The Army, Navy, and Reserves" that specifically drew attention to the military service of

³Anthony John Mundella (1825-97) worked for passage of the Educational Act of 1870 and the Act of 1881. As a member of Parliament, his views on denominational education were moderate since he was concerned about the issue of "religious liberty." While he recognized the contributions of denominational schools, he felt that secularized schools would be most effective. DNB, s.v. "Mundella, Anthony John."

⁴Lord Randolph Churchill (1849-1895) was an outspoken conservative party leader who was frequently at the center of political controversy because of his attacks on Gladstone's government. DNB, supp., s.v. "Churchill, Randolph Henry Spencer."

⁵"Important Speeches by Mr. Mundella, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Mr. Matthew Arnold," The Jewish Chronicle, 23 May 1884, supp., p. 1.

Major Albert E. Goldsmid on the eve of his departure to Khartoum.⁶ This celebration of Jewish education became a forum for the expression of patriotism and was given prominent support by members of the Jewish clergy, including Dr. Hermann Adler, Chief Rabbi,⁷ and Rev. Prof. Marks⁸

Furthermore, the success of the Jews' Free School and Arnold's work on its behalf were repeatedly identified with the stability of British institutions. While he humorously acknowledged his long acquaintance with the school, Arnold toasted "The Houses of Parliament," observing that it is "the necessary organ through which our national life has to be

⁶Albert Edward Goldsmid (1846-1904) had an extensive military career that included his promotion to the rank of lieutenant colonel in 1888, and his service in the South African War. He also active in a number of Jewish organizations, and the colonization movement. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Goldsmid," by Nathan Ricardo.

⁷Hermann Adler (1839-1911) officially succeeded his father as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire in 1891, but had been appointed his assistant in 1879. As Chief Rabbi, he recieved various awards including the Royal Victorian Order, and he published several theological works. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Adler, Hermann." Bermant notes that "Edward VII spoke of him as 'my Chief Rabbi,' and that under him the United Synagogue seemed to be the Jewish Branch of the Anglican Establishment." Chiam Bermant, The Cousinhood (New York: MacMillan, 1971), 370.

⁸David Wolf Marks (1811-1909) was appointed "minister," or preacher of the first London reform synagogue in 1840 where he worked for sixty years. Marks was also professor of Hebrew at University London College from 1849-98. V[ivian] D[avid] Lipman, A History of the Jews in Britain since 1858 (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1990), 252-3.

carried on."⁹ Jewish support of the British government was also evidenced by the Parliamentary service of Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild,¹⁰ and Sir Julian Goldsmid,¹¹ both of whom attended the banquet. Lord Randolph Churchill added that education will continue to be influenced by the British government, since the "development [of the school system] will take the form of the State assuming to itself a larger share of the expenditure and control of national elementary education."¹² The Houses of Parliament were paralleled with the Jews' Free School as vehicles of the ordered and controlled process of government and education. Again, the connection between the Jewish community and the State was the school and Inspector Arnold.

⁹"Important Speeches by Mr. Mundella, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Mr. Matthew Arnold," 2.

¹⁰Nathaniel Mayer Rothschild (1840-1915) was the son of Lionel Nathan Rothschild, the first professing Jew to enter Parliament. He was a member of the House of Commons from 1865-1885, and after becoming the first professing Jew to be made a peer, he entered the House of Lords in 1885. He actively protested the Russian and Rumanian persecution of Jews by refusing to arrange loans with these governments through his banking house. Rothschild also served as president of the United Synagogue. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Rothschild."

¹¹Sir Julian Goldsmid (1838-1896) served as a member of Parliament for many years, and was active in several Jewish organizations such as the Anglo-Jewish Association. His diplomatic connections and familiarity with foreign affairs furthered his efforts on behalf of Eastern European Jews. He was president of the Jews' Infant School and a committee member for the Jews' Free School. The Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Goldsmid," by Goodman Lipkind.

¹²"Important Speeches by Mr. Mundella, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Mr. Matthew Arnold," 3.

The Jews' Free School Banquet serves as a point of departure for exploring Arnold's relationship to the community. It illustrates, first, how Jewish participation in cultural practices such as the toasting of the monarchy become symbolic of the overall support of British institutions. In addition, it suggests that one of the pre-occupations of post-emancipation Jewry was to win the recognition of the British government for its own institutions such as the Jews' Free School. This account of the banquet also indicates that as school inspector, Arnold mediates between the Jewish community and the British government. The complexity of Arnold's position can be better understood by giving further attention to his biographical connections to the community as well as the function of Jewish education.

The Jewish Chronicle's account of the Jews' Free School Banquet indicates that even if Arnold had not been school inspector his notoriety as a literary and cultural critic would have still made him a well-known figure to the community. Arnold is described as "the principal apostle of a catholic form of culture which avoids emphasizing doctrinal differences, but recognizes all true effort in the kindest phase of the religious spirit."¹³ Not only is he described as reconciler of religious difference, but his background in both classical and sacred subjects make him "still a more

¹³"Jews Free School Banquet," 9.

interesting figure at an educational gathering."¹⁴ During his toast at the Banquet, Hermann Adler implies that his listeners have a general knowledge of Arnold's literary works by referring to him as "that distinguished author." Adler also reveals his own familiarity with Arnold's religious works:

I would be the first to bear testimony, as I have done in my published items and spoken utterances, to that noble tribute which that most eminent critic has paid to the work done by every teacher of righteousness throughout the world. In our own ears there are still ringing the eloquent and glowing periods in which Mr. Arnold discoursed to the New World upon the great lesson taught to the Old World--the Hebrew prophet--in which he announced the great truth that states are saved not by majorities, but by the reforming power of a righteous remnant."¹⁵

He continues by poking fun at "that stinging sarcasm, that keen satire, with which the author of 'Literature and Dogma,' once assailed some of the learned Bishops of the Church" and concludes that if Arnold "proposed the health of the clergy, we should not have remained unscathed this evening."¹⁶ His audience responds with laughter suggesting that it is at least familiar with the controversies surrounding Arnold's works.

As Finestein has pointed out, Arnold's work as school inspector brought him in contact with a cross section of the Jewish community.¹⁷ Arnold frequently encountered Jewish

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵"Important Speeches by Mr. Mundella, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Mr. Matthew Arnold," 2.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Israel Finestein, "Matthew Arnold and the Jews," The Jewish Quarterly Review 23 (Winter 1975-6): 11.

school children when administering exams and visiting schools. He also dealt with teachers from a number of different schools including Miss Miriam Harris at the Jews' Infant School, Mr. Jacob Woolf at the Westminster Jews' Free School, and Mr. Moses Angel at the Jews' Free School in Bell Lane.¹⁸ Arnold would have encountered the most prominent and wealthy Jewish families such as the Rothschilds, Mocattas, and Goldsmids at the Jews' Free School Banquet.¹⁹ His correspondence with Louisa de Rothschild also indicates that he visited her home, Ashton Clinton, on several occasions, where he met not only members of the Rothschild family, but also family friends such as Benjamin Disraeli. Arnold was acquainted with the scholar Emanuel Deutsch and would have encountered members of the Jewish clergy at the Banquet if not on other occasions. Consequently, Arnold seems to have developed a number of both personal and professional relationships with members of the Jewish community.

Yet, even Jews who had little contact with Arnold through these channels would have been familiar with his work as school inspector. Much of his long career as a school

¹⁸The Jewish Chronicle provides accounts of Arnold's meetings with teachers from various Jewish schools such as those mentioned here.

¹⁹My comments here serve only as a brief review of Arnold's social relationships with Jews. More specific biographical details are provided in Ruth apRoberts, Arnold and God (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), and Park Honan, Matthew Arnold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

inspector was brought to the readers of The Jewish Chronicle by the publication of his reports. His name is often preceded by the words "Her Majesty's Inspector" or "Government Inspector" so that the reader's attention is continually drawn to his official capacity as representative of the government, and by extrapolation, to the significance of his reports. Arnold is repeatedly portrayed as a witness to the success of Jewish communal efforts in the paper's accounts of his reports on the school system. For example, readers are told about "the remarkable testimony borne by Mr. Matthew Arnold to the excellence of the educational work in the Westminster Jews' Free School."²⁰ The Jewish Chronicle emphasizes that this is not mere flattery, but "the Report...is all the more notable in as much as its author is Mr. Matthew Arnold, a critic, as all the world knows who is both acute and severe."²¹ Arnold's reputation as a "severe" critic should convince the reader that Jewish education is equivalent to that provided by other schools since so "unimpeachable an authority on educational matters as Mr. Arnold, will constitute the most striking testimony to the estimation in which the school is held by the most competent judges."²² The Jewish Chronicle made certain that its readers were well-acquainted with

²⁰"Our Communal Schools," The Jewish Chronicle, 27 April 1883, p. 9.

²¹Ibid.

²²"The Jews' Free School," The Jewish Chronicle, 9 May 1884, p. 11.

Arnold's work, which in turn served to continually affirm the successful efforts of a major Jewish institution, the school system.

Arnold's role as school inspector also placed him in the intersection of political and theological questions of concern to the Jewish community. The issue of religious education in State-funded schools was highly politicized during the nineteenth century with debates over the passage of Forster's school bill.²³ The fate of denominational schools was not only of concern to Dissenters who wanted to avoid State control of religious education, but also to Jews who feared that such schools would increase proselytizing. Vivian Lipman explains that the growth of Jewish day schools was "influenced by the school system developed by the Church of England and the Free Churches: in London at least the Jewish day schools were provided or expanded as a counter to missionary schools for the Jewish poor."²⁴ By 1881, the Jews' Free School had 3000 pupils who were educated in both secular and religious subjects as well as were protected from proselytizing of

²³The bill, named after William Edward Forster, was passed on August 9, 1870. It was an attempt to meet the growing educational needs of the country by providing enough schools, state inspections, and the protection of religious liberty. The W. Cowper Temple clause was added to exclude "catechism" by "any particular denomination." Thus the teaching of religion was not abandoned by the schools, nor was it monopolized by a single denomination. While this bill did not solve the educational problems, it has been considered an important step towards compulsory education. Clark, 460-4.

²⁴Lipman, 29.

various Christian sects. As a recipient of government funds, the school would have also been in the midst of the debates over government-sponsored religious education.

Arnold's reports suggest official recognition of the school just as the attendance of the members of the Department of Education at the banquet does, but they also indicate that Jewish studies could be taught without compromising the students' secular education. Jewish studies were generally limited to "Hebrew reading and writing, translation of the prayer book and Pentateuch, and sometimes of the Old Testament" with little attention to biblical commentaries or Talmud studies.²⁵ Even these limited studies seem to cause anxiety in the community over the possibility that they interfered with other, more secular education. The Jewish Chronicle was forced to defend their inclusion as late as 1888:

The combination of Hebrew teaching with secular instruction still exercises no influence on the latter, save a salutary one. The opinion expressed by the late MATTHEW ARNOLD that the study of a second language is calculated to stimulate the faculties of the pupil, and to improve the quality of teaching generally, seems to be verified more clearly as time goes on.²⁶

In this way, Arnold indirectly served to further the denominational aspect of the school, that helped the community provide an education geared to perpetuate Jewish religious

²⁵Ibid., 29.

²⁶"Our Educational Machinery," The Jewish Chronicle, 20 July 1888, p. 9.

practice and Jewish identity.

To more fully appreciate the import of Arnold's work as government inspector, it is necessary to recognize that the functions assigned to the schools extended beyond the obvious goals of providing a religious and secular education. They were also thought to stabilize the social and political position of the Jewish community at large.²⁷ Throughout the nineteenth century, Jews were caricatured in literary works and cartoons and were suspected of being unpatriotic, especially during debates over emancipation, the Bulgarian crisis, and periods of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe. The large-scale immigration of Eastern European Jews created a group of easily recognized "aliens" living in London's East End. The Jewish school system was to have a pivotal role in transforming "aliens" into Englishmen and in diffusing hostility towards them. Eugene Black describes the attitude of Anglo-Jewry as to how the schools should achieve this goal: "Schools should instruct the Jewish young well; they must also teach them how to be British and how to be Jewish. Schools were the front-lines in the campaign to shape the Jewish subculture."²⁸

Consequently, one of the functions of the Jews' Free

²⁷Victorian Jews frequently assigned this role to the schools though contemporary historians debate their success in stabilizing the community.

²⁸Eugene C. Black, The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880-1920 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 104.

School and other institutions like it was to anglicize the children of Eastern European immigrants. The Jewish Chronicle is explicit in its support of the schools' drive to perpetuate "Englishness": "The best interests of the community are obviously bound up with an institution which is preparing a host of children, born in imperfectly civilized countries, to live, without fear and without reproach, as fully naturalized English citizens."²⁹ This is also an underlying theme of the Jews' Free School Banquet that Arnold attends. Adler assures his audience that "no effort will be spared at the same time to render them [the students] honorable and useful citizens of the great empire to which it is our privilege and honour to belong."³⁰ Chairman Mundella adds that the former students "have become happy and worthy citizens through the good teaching that these schools have afforded them."³¹ In this way, the schools sought to replace Eastern European traditions, language, and religious worship with those "appropriate" to English life. This process of anglicization would demonstrate Jewish solidarity with England much the same as toasting the monarchy and other government institutions did.

The schools would not only counteract poverty by

²⁹"The Jews' Free School," 11.

³⁰"Important Speeches by Mr. Mundella, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Mr. Matthew Arnold," 2.

³¹Ibid., 4.

providing the education and skills necessary for employment of Jewish students, but they would also protect the reputation of the community at large by indirectly influencing life at home. Educating the children would transform their home life, since "the whole family [would] insensibly be converted into Englishmen and Englishwomen, while preserving their pure and noble faith."³² In this way, the Jewish school system provided a special service since immigrant parents might not allow their children to attend other schools. The children's education helps produce "Englishmen," but also improves the economic position of the immigrant, which in turn protects the reputation of the entire community: "We teach the children, the children teach the parents; the Pole who might beg, or starve, or steal, and bring discredit on the whole house of Israel, learns enough to qualify him for respectable occupations."³³ Without such a system, "the name of Jew would have become again a bye-word and reproach, all the least reputable walks of life would have become filled by Jews shut out by their ignorance of the ways and language of the land in which they lived...."³⁴

Arnold himself becomes both a participant in and an observer of this process of anglicization by approving the quality of Jewish education and by noting its success. One of

³²"The Jews Free School Banquet," 9.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

the most frequent complaints about these children from "imperfectly civilized countries" is that they are "utterly unable to speak a word of English or indeed of any recognized language."³⁵ Many of the immigrants spoke Polish and some spoke Yiddish, which was frequently referred to as mere "jargon." Yet, the language problem centers not so much on the ability to communicate, but on being readily identifiable as a Jew. The Jewish Chronicle describes the success of the schools in eradicating this problem:

It is not long since Jews of the humbler orders...were to be recognized by the distinctive twang which accompanied their speech. This survived, perhaps, the mispronunciation of which English writers even now do not hesitate to make the object of ridicule....One of the points which Mr. Matthew Arnold bestows the highest commendation in his last Report...is the clear and correct enunciation of the pupils. His praise is not confined to one part of the school. It is given to boys and girls alike.³⁶

Arnold is reinforcing the value of anglicizing the children by commending their fluent use of English because as inspector he gives it official acceptance. In this way, his commendation may also be allaying fears that Jews, especially immigrant Jews may not be considered Englishmen, and may jeopardize the well-being of the entire community.

This process of anglicization is most important not only for transforming the immigrant into an "Englishman," but also for diffusing prejudices against the community. The Jewish

³⁵"The Jews' Free School," 11.

³⁶"Our Communal Schools," The Jewish Chronicle, 4 May 1883, p. 9.

Chronicle identifies the school as functioning "to disarm possible prejudice from without, and to knit the various constituents of the community more closely together into a homogenous whole."³⁷ The goal of the community is to identify the immigrant with the highly anglicized institutions and lifestyle of the native Jew rather than with the "uncivilized" customs of Eastern Europe. The mastery of the English language becomes indicative of the mastery of social and political practices, and the failure to gain this skill is indicative of corruption. In "The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!" George Eliot is concerned that "English" may "undergo a premature fusion with immigrants of alien blood; that [their] distinctive national characteristics should be in danger of obliteration by the predominating quality of foreign settlers."³⁸ She adds that "this marring of our speech...is minor evil" compared with those "whose appreciation of our political and social life must often be as approximate or fatally erroneous as their delivery of our language."³⁹ By supporting the school system, Arnold is also endorsing a process that Anglo-Jews viewed as disarming prejudice against their community, and ultimately showing its support of English social and political life.

³⁷"Our Educational Machinery," 10.

³⁸George Eliot, The Works of George Eliot The Warwickshire Edition, vol. 20, Theophrastus Such (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1907-8), 256.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 257-8.

Unfortunately, this process of anglicization was actually detrimental to the nineteenth-century Jewish community, weakening both communal and family ties. Israel Zangwill's Children of the Ghetto (1892) gives a fictional portrait of the breakdown of the ties between father and son that is facilitated by the education process. Benjamin Ansell is taught that his father's way of life, religious practices, and language are sources of embarrassment, and must be abandoned.⁴⁰ In her sociological study of the acculturation of Jewish children, Rosalyn Livshin observes that while the intention was not to weaken communal sympathies, the educational process did not adequately reinforce a sense of Jewishness. Children were torn between the culture of the school and their home; the emphasis on English resulted in the "absence of a common spoken language between parent and children."⁴¹ In fact, Llyod Gartner explains that anglicization "was so successful that after 1918 the Jewish communal anxiety was to promote Judaization before its Anglicized generation drifted out of reach."⁴²

This analysis of the Jews' Free School Banquet attempts

⁴⁰Israel Zangwill, Children of the Ghetto (New York: MacMillan, 1895).

⁴¹Rosalyn Livshin, "The Acculturation of the Children of Immigrant Jews in Manchester 1890-1930," in The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry, ed. David Cesarani (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 87.

⁴²Llyod P. Gartner, The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1870-1914 (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1960), 240.

to outline the complex multifaceted relationship that Arnold had with the Jewish community. He is an official figure tied to the institutions of the British government that was helping to maintain a Jewish educational system. This system functioned to inculcate students with patriotism and Jewish religious values, but unfortunately it also worked to disrupt immigrant life. His social life included friendships and acquaintances with the most wealthy and powerful Jewish families in England. This position seemed to flatter him, just as his assessments of Jewish education were flattering to the elite of the community. He was an influential man of letters able to influence, or at least, challenge, public opinion, and his reputation as an educator made his satisfaction with Jewish education all the more important. As school inspector, Arnold participated in the process of anglicization that attempted to further identify Jews with England. As the following chapters will show, his literary works also participate in the discourses that define this important relationship.

CHAPTER VI

HEBREW, JEW, OR ISRAELITE:

HEBRAISM AND ANGLO-JEWISH IDENTITY

In his letters of the 1860s, Arnold repeatedly expresses his enthusiasm over the popularity of the terms he had coined in Culture and Anarchy. He writes to his mother on June 12, 1869:

Princess Alice is quite fascinated with my Culture and Anarchy, uses all its phrases....The Crown Princess is now reading the book. You will see that it will have a considerable effect in the end, and the chapters on Hellenism and Hebraism are in the main, I am convinced, so true that they will form a centre for English thought and speculation on the matters treated in them.¹

Another letter informs Lady de Rothschild that both she and Disraeli, who had recently completed his first term as Prime Minister, are being sent copies of his book. Consequently, Arnold seems well aware that his audience included both Jewish and non-Jewish readers, and that his ideas of Hebraism and Hellenism would be scrutinized by both groups.

Twentieth-century critics do not always share Arnold's enthusiasm for Culture and Anarchy, but they have grappled in a variety of different ways with his conceptions of Hebraism and Hellenism. William E. Buckler focusses on how Arnold's

¹Matthew Arnold, Letters of Matthew Arnold 1848-1888, ed. W. E. Russell (New York: Macmillan, 1895), 2: 13.

rhetorical style helps him further his role as moralist in Culture and Anarchy, arguing that Arnold is attempting "the recovery of the metaphors Hebraism and Hellenism from the rhetorical misuse of others, specifically of Frederick Robertson and Heinrich Heine."² By "converting history into poetic myth," Arnold appeals to the reader's imagination in both the development of these terms and his poetic scheme of history:

"Hebraism and Hellenism" is a superbly well-articulated example of the rhetorical use of the archetypal myth. Having initiated the book in what he perceived as the archetypal contention between the desire to "know" and the desire to "do," he then sees that conflict realizing itself in the history of Western civilization.³

Buckler sees Arnold's exploration of the "archetypal contention" as imparting a timeless quality to the argument of Culture and Anarchy that is responsible for the continued critical attention it receives. Yet, this argument effectively divorces Arnold's work from its historical context so that it is difficult to trace his contribution to nineteenth-century debates over the history of Western civilization, or to trace its relationship to his readers.

In contrast, Stephen Prickett recognizes, as Arnold himself does, that Hellenism and Hebraism "form a centre for English thought and speculation." While arguing that "its historical influence is all out of proportion to the quality

²William E. Buckler, Matthew Arnold's Prose: Three Essays in Literary Enlargement (New York: AMS Press, 1983), 98.

³Ibid., 98-99.

of the argument," Prickett admits that Culture and Anarchy "is one of those rare works which has actually modified the English language."⁴ This reason alone necessitates that critical attention be given to the ideological assumptions that result in the "mismatched" pairs of Hebrew and Hellene. According to Prickett, the Hebrew should be paired with the Philistine while the Hellene should be paired with the Barbarian. Arnold's reliance on Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Church and State as the source of his binary oppositions results in these "mismatched" pairs. Prickett traces this interconnection to show that the demythologized Church of Christ is nothing more than narrow moralism or Hebraism while clerisy tied to cultural life is Hellenism.⁵ Prickett's historical study is extremely valuable especially because it recognizes how Arnold's language is informed by nineteenth-century ideological assumptions about the relationship between Church and State.

Bryan Cheyette also uses a historical approach to analyze how the ideological assumptions in Culture and Anarchy are indicative of the liberal state's accommodation of the racial "Other." While his discussion of Arnold is brief, Cheyette notes "a racial vocabulary" that informs Arnold's discussion

⁴Stephen Prickett, "'Hebrew' versus 'Hellene' as a principle of literary criticism," in Rediscovering Hellenism, ed. G.W. Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 138.

⁵Ibid., 146-7.

of Hebraism and Hellenism. He refers to Dr. Thomas Arnold's argument against the inclusion of Jews in Parliament, and suggests the liberal moralist Matthew attempts "to replace his father's racial exclusion of 'the Jew' with a much broader national 'culture' that would include the social 'other.'"⁶ Yet, this all inclusive idea of culture assimilates the "racial 'other'" by forcing the Jews to abandon their "racial particularism."⁷ Cheyette identifies the racial ambivalence embodied in Arnold's texts, but it is beyond the scope of his study to consider how Jewish writers incorporate his ideas into their own works.

The critics discussed here use different approaches in their analyses of Culture and Anarchy, but they commonly recognize the influence of Arnold's terminology on both English language and literary studies. Cheyette's study of the relationship between the liberal accommodation of Victorian Jews and Culture and Anarchy is particularly valuable, because it raises questions about how they may have referred to this work as they discussed their relationship to English society. In fact, Arnold's description of Hebraism is popularized at a time when Jews are debating how their three names (Hebrew, Jew or Israelite) represent their multiple roles in a post-emancipation society.

References to Hebraism can be found in a variety of

⁶Cheyette, 18.

⁷Ibid., 20.

different texts that are specifically concerned with constructing an Anglo-Jewish identity. Such references situate Arnold's cultural critique in the midst of debates over Jewish integration into post-emancipation society, just as Arnold's role as school inspector links him to the anglicization of immigrant children. In discussions about Hebraism, Jewish writers often reveal their sense of communal identity as well as their anxieties about English attitudes towards an "emancipated" but readily identifiable Jewish community. The Jewish writers studied here internalize not only Arnold's positive assessment of the Semitic that informs his conception of Hebraism, but also his negative attitudes in a process like that described in Sander Gilman's Jewish Self-Hatred.⁸ This chapter will consider how nineteenth-century Jews find the "assimilative," or "universal" quality of Arnold's theory of "culture" useful in making their own arguments for the active participation of Jews in post-

⁸Gilman describes Jewish self-hatred as "a term interchangeable with 'Jewish anti-Judaism' or 'Jewish anti-Semitism.'" It is "a specific mode of self-abnegation that has existed among Jews throughout their history" which "results from outsiders' acceptance of the mirage of themselves generated by their reference group--that group in society which they see as defining them--as a reality." For example, Anglo-Jews internalized "the mirage of themselves" as excessively materialistic, and see this as "a reality" on which they frequently base criticism of their own community even though their behavior may be no different than that of non-Jews. Sander L. Gilman, Jewish Self-Hatred (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 1-2.

emancipation society.⁹

An overview of the term's etymology will provide information about its development in the historical context of the nineteenth century as well as about the connotations it has for Victorian Jews. The Oxford English Dictionary shows considerable circularity in its definition of the terms Hebrew, Israelite and Jew. A Hebrew is defined as "a person belonging to the Semitic tribe or nation descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; an Israelite, a Jew."¹⁰ The editors note in parentheses that "historically, the term is usually applied to early Israelites; in modern use it avoids the religious and other associations often attaching to Jew."¹¹ In the nineteenth century, this subtle distinction was not always made, so that "Hebrew" was often used interchangeably with "Jew" or "Israelite." The "Israelite" is defined as "one of the people of Israel; one of the Hebrew people; a Jew."¹² The OED also notes the usage of "Israel" as

⁹The term culture will be used in two different ways throughout this chapter. It will indicate the over-arching social, political, and religious practices of Victorian society. It will also indicate Arnold's conception of aesthetic awareness that he develops in his prose. Park describes Arnold's idea of culture as "a psychological attitude which implies a refusal to be locked in, finally enrolled, seduced by any idea except the idea of mental freedom." When the term refers specifically to this usage as developed by Arnold, it will appear in quotation marks. Honan, 346.

¹⁰OED, 2nd ed., s.v. "Hebrew."

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²OED, s.v. "Israelite."

"the people descended from Israel or Jacob, the 'children of Israel' collectively; the Jewish or Hebrew nation or people." This collective use of "Israel" to refer to the Jewish community is also quite common in the nineteenth century, especially in reference to the possibility of a Jewish state. Finally, the OED refers to a "Jew" as "a person of Hebrew descent; one whose religion is Judaism; an Israelite."¹³ This term is frequently associated with a number of pejorative meanings including to be "jewed," and "jew-bated." These pejorative meanings associated with "Jew" contrast with the positive connotations of "Hebrew" and "Israelite" both of which retain their historical and biblical associations.

The Jewish press illustrates how the terms Hebrew, Jew, and Israel are used interchangeably, while also acknowledging that they have different connotations. In 1866, The Jewish Chronicle published a series of short articles and letters that debated the usage of the "three names" belonging to the Jews. One writer carefully traces the derivation of these words concluding that "according to the modern acceptance of the terms Jew, Israelite, and Hebrew, they are applied indiscriminately to that race of people who place faith in the Old Testament and the law and doctrines propounded by the prophet Moses."¹⁴ But he also notes that "Hebrew" seems to

¹³OED, s.v. "Jew."

¹⁴Joel Emanuel, "Are We Jews or Hebrews?" The Jewish Chronicle, 25 May 1866, p. 2.

a more respectable appellation:

It appears to be a very widely disseminated opinion that the word "Jew" is merely a nickname applied to an Israelite; so that men who would be proud to acknowledge themselves Hebrews shrink from the appellation of the word Jew under the impression that it conveys a tone of reproach and contempt.¹⁵

A third respondent indicates his frustration with this practice of seeking a respectable appellation: "I answer by whatever name a descendant from the patriarchs may be called, whether Hebrew, Israelite, or Jew, let the individual so addressed exclaim...[his heritage]." ¹⁶ Yet, as the previous examples suggest, not all nineteenth-century Jews seem comfortable with the idea of "exclaiming" a Jewish heritage. These "names" are not mere abstractions, but instead, they convey ideological assumptions that influence the acknowledgement of Jewish identity. The positive connotations assigned to "Hebrew" seem to shape the responses of Jewish writers to Arnold's term Hebraism.

The previous chapters on Disraeli have indicated how his successful political career further complicated this issue of naming and identity. Accounts of Disraeli's Jewishness also indicate how this process of identification repeatedly alters the individual's social standing. The Jewish Chronicle identifies him as "neither an apostate nor a Jew," but as

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶J. Stranders, "To the Editor of The Jewish Chronicle," The Jewish Chronicle, 1 June 1866, p. 6.

"born of Hebrew parents."¹⁷ The paper also argues that as a "Jew" Christians can disregard Disraeli, but as a "Hebrew" they must recognize the contributions of his "race," even though he is a "Christian." In this example, "Jewishness" is seen as a social liability, but the "Hebraic" is linked to historic and religious contributions. This identification of the "Hebrew" with the positive qualities of the Jew, and with contributions to Western society provides an important context for the Jewish response to Culture and Anarchy. Arnold's inclusion of Hebraism as a force in Western civilization provides a link between "Jewishness" and "Englishness," that underwrites the fashioning of Anglo-Jewish identity.

The significance of this "inclusiveness" can be further demonstrated by comparing Arnold's term to that coined by Frederick W. Robertson. Culture and Anarchy contains references to Robertson's term "Hebraicism" which seems to be Arnold's source. In "The Christian Church," he aligns a series of relationships between Jew and Christian that prompts his use of the term:

And so, again, when the Jew in time past linked himself with the Jew, with those of the same nation, there you have what in ancient times was called Judaism, and in modern times is called Hebraicism--a system, a combination, but not a Church. The Church rises out of the family....there is the family, then the tribe, then the nation; and then the nation merges itself in humanity. And the nation which refuses to merge its nationality in humanity, to lose itself in the general interests of mankind, is left behind, and loses almost

¹⁷"The New Premier," 4.

its religious nationality--like the Jewish people.¹⁸

According to Robertson, Jewish exclusiveness results in the loss of "religious nationality" because Jews 'refuse to merge' with humanity. The universalism of the Church is linked to the progress of humanity, and since Jews retain their "nationality," they are "left behind," divorced from the "general interests of mankind." Not only does he imply that the terms "Hebraicism" and "Judaism" are interchangeable, but since the Jewish religion is "a combination," it is denied the status and power of an institution that a "church" is granted. "Hebraicism" becomes indicative of the pressures placed on the "modern Jew" to assimilate, since "Jewishness" is not compatible with the future development of humanity. Rather than exclude "Hebraicism," Culture and Anarchy incorporates it in the cultural movement of Western civilization.

While Robertson effectively abandons the possibility of Jewish participation in nineteenth-century society, Arnold's conception of Hebraism seems to codify a narrative of Jewish contributions to religious development and Western civilization that is repeatedly debated by the community's intellectual elite. "Hebraism" is linked to Jewish considerations of identity not only because it is partly derived from "Hebrew," a term used in reference to Jews, but also because Arnold himself makes specific references to the

¹⁸Frederick W. Robertson, Sermons Preached at Brighton, new ed. (New York: Harper, 1871), 556-7.

Hebrew race and its history so that the term is precluded from functioning solely as a metaphor divorced from social or political realities. Arnold's opening paragraphs for the chapter "Hebraism and Hellenism" immediately establish these interconnections. Arnold identifies "doing" and "thinking" as "rival" forces that have governed the "history of man": "And to give these forces names [energy and intelligence] from the two races of men who have supplied the most signal and splendid manifestations of them, we may call them...Hebraism and Hellenism."¹⁹ This movement from the abstraction of "doing" to historical specificity that recognizes the "Hebrew people" as the "race" most exhibiting this quality in its past is repeatedly picked up by Jewish writers who themselves use historical and religious debates as a forum to discuss the contemporary concerns of Judaism and its adherents.

Hebraism is equally useful to a positive valuation of Jewishness because Arnold defines it as an "eternal" moral force that significantly underwrites British society. In contrast to Robertson's ideas, Hebraism is not to be "left behind"; the Jewish people are to be recognized as witnesses of this morality, rather than as those who have lost their "religious nationality." Arnold explains that "the uppermost idea with Hebraism is conduct and obedience," or "strictness

¹⁹Matthew Arnold, Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1960-1977), vol. 5, Culture and Anarchy, 163.

of conscience" in seeking "man's perfection or salvation."²⁰ While Arnold advocates Hellenizing, he also points out that Hebraism is not to be usurped, but "that we shall yet come again to Hebraism for that devout energy in embracing our ideal," and that "the habits and discipline received from Hebraism remain for our race an eternal possession."²¹ The Jewish people "were charged with setting powerfully forth that side of divine order to which the words conscience and self-conquest point," in addition to being "'entrusted with the oracles of God.'"²² According to Vassilis Lambropoulos, Arnold identifies Hebraism with authority, or with order. In Culture and Anarchy, Arnold outlines a process of Hellenization in which "the old order will not be destroyed...but rather supplemented by a new force," or in other words, "the rejuvenation of Hebraic authority with Hellenic culture."²³ By identifying Hebraism with "order" and "moral authority," Arnold's work can be used to support the Jewish argument that identifies Hebrew history and religion as contributing to the spiritual welfare and stability of English society.

²⁰Ibid., 5: 164-5.

²¹Ibid., 5: 255.

²²Ibid., 5: 170.

²³Vassilis Lambropoulos, "Violence and the Liberal Imagination: The Representation of Hellenism in Matthew Arnold," in The Violence of Literary Representation, ed. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (New York: Routledge, 1989), 181-3.

Culture and Anarchy not only identifies Hebraism as a force in Western culture, but it also includes an account of the "racial" compatibility of the Semite and the Englishman. This practice of speculating on the compatibility of different races, and even of a particular race and religion seems to be so pervasive that it is rarely questioned. Arnold's speculations on how Hebraism with its "Semitic" origins comes to operate on the Indo-European is grounded in the racial theories of Ernst Renan, Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, and Émile Burnouf,²⁴ allowing him to claim "scientific" validity for his observations on the relationship between these races. Yet, he expresses concern over the divisive nature of such theories: "Science has now made visible to everybody the great...elements of difference which lie in race, and [in] how signal a manner they make the genius and history of an Indo-European people vary from those of a Semitic people."²⁵ The Hebraic consciousness of the English seems aberrant according to this perspective: "Hellenism is of Indo-European growth, Hebraism of Semitic growth...we English...seem to belong naturally to the movement of Hellenism."²⁶ This racial difference would initially suggest that the "psychology" of the Jewish and English peoples are incompatible. Such an

²⁴Frederic Faverty, Matthew Arnold: The Ethnologist (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1951), 166-170.

²⁵Arnold, Complete Prose Works, 5: 173.

²⁶Ibid.

argument carried to its fullest would jeopardize the stability of the Jewish community in England far more than accusations of the Jews' exclusiveness.

Arnold indirectly addresses this line of reasoning that would situate the Jews outside of English society for both racial and religious reasons. He argues that the English have "a Hebraizing turn, with a signal affinity" for "the master bent of Hebrew life."²⁷ In fact, they take "Hebraism as the law of human development," leading to the array of political controversies outlined in "Our Liberal Practitioners."²⁸ Arnold sees such behavior as indicative of "the essential unity of man," an assumption that has its roots in eighteenth-century interpretations of the Bible:

But nothing more strongly marks the essential unity of man, than the affinities we can perceive, in this point or that, between members of one family of peoples and members of another. And no affinity of this kind is more strongly marked than that likeness in the strength and prominence of moral fibre, which, notwithstanding immense elements of difference, knits in some special sort the genius and history of us English...to the genius and history of the Hebrew people.²⁹

Using this logic, he simultaneously upholds the "scientific truth" of racial difference between Semites and Aryans, while also identifying "psychological" tendencies that demonstrate the "affinity" between these races. This racial compatibility is attributed to the "likeness in the strength and prominence

²⁷Ibid., 5: 174.

²⁸Ibid., 5: 171.

²⁹Ibid., 5: 173-4.

of moral fibre." (His recognition of a "moral" kinship has a long and varied history tied to Puritan interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, and so does not originate with Arnold.) Arnold's observations here are particularly revealing, because they indicate the interconnection between religious and racial assumptions that repeatedly influence Anglo-Jewish identity, and contribute to the contradictory position of the Jew in England, for the Jews can be simultaneously viewed as a religious minority and a distinctive racial group.

However, Cheyette argues that this account of the English inclination for "Hebraism" illustrates Arnold's desire to assimilate the Jewish "Other." He describes how this passage also reveals the desire to control the "anarchic" potential of Hebraism with its Semitic roots, because it seems to exist in opposition to "we English." This desire is fulfilled by subsuming the "racialized Jew" in the universalizing ideal of the "essential unity of man." Consequently, "it is precisely by foregrounding racial particularity that liberalism can then lay claims to 'civilize' or 'universalize' the racial 'others' that it 'emancipates.'" ³⁰ By constructing 'racial difference' in this way, uncontrolled 'Hebraism' can "be represented as a potentially disruptive or 'anarchic' force." ³¹ Cheyette further argues that Arnold's preference for his own conception of "culture" over that of racial

³⁰Cheyette, 19.

³¹Ibid.

identity is evidenced by his unfavorable allusions to racial characteristics of the Jew. For Arnold, the "universalized" Jew is one who is "hellenized" and therefore, able to participate in the "national culture."

From another perspective, Arnold's discussion of the "essential unity of man" also points to the contingency of the relationship between the Jews and the English. Rather than appeal to either democratic ideals or mutual respect for the rule of law as the principles that contribute to the cohesiveness of the nation, Arnold relies on mutual "affinities" that the Semitic and the English have for both the "hebraizing bent" and "strictness of conscience." Thus an "affinity" or similar "bent" that is shared by these different races displaces the responsibilities of citizenship, and the recognition of legal rights as the basis for national cohesiveness. Working with this assumption, Arnold attempts to show how race contributes to the shaping of the national psychology, which, in turn, determines values or religious codes that can be internalized by a particular people. Arnold de-emphasizes the incompatibility between the "Semitic" Jew and the "Aryan" English by focussing on their "Hebraizing turn," and only briefly touches on the question of how Christianity with its Semitic origins is amenable to Indo-Europeans. In addition, Fairbairn's article on race and religion indicates the pervasiveness of these ideas as well as the significance of Culture and Anarchy for such debates. He

refers to Arnold's work in order to support his conclusions that "the Semitic family [had] a mode of conceiving deity...giv[ing] at once unity to their idea of God and a specific character to their religions."³²

Theories of "national psychology" discussed by Arnold and others in this period also inform accounts of Anglo-Jewish identity. Joseph Jacobs (1854-1916) theorized about how religious ideas are conceptualized and transmitted between different racial groups in "The God of Israel: A History" (1879). Born in Australia, Jacobs received his advanced education at St. John's College in Cambridge, and spent the next twenty or so years in England.³³ Though not as well-known as Arnold, Jacobs was an influential member of the Jewish community who actively contributed to its intellectual life as a proponent of its causes and as a scholar. He frequently held important positions in Jewish organizations such as the Society of Hebrew Studies, and the Anglo-Jewish Historical Society. He also established a modest reputation as a critic by publishing essays on George Eliot and Arnold that were later collected in Literary Studies (1895). In this collection, Jacobs included a study of "Discourses on America" in which he described Arnold as "more Hebraic than the

³²Fairbairn, 794.

³³This sketch of Jacobs's life is drawn from information in The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Jacobs, Joseph," by Nathan Ricardo.

Hebrews."³⁴ His teaching of literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York suggests he was in the position to further influence Jewish opinion of Arnold. Jacobs also served as editor of The American Hebrew which in 1922 published one of the early articles on Arnold's relationship to the Jewish community. Consequently, Jacobs's references to Arnold's work further elucidate the ways it participated in the construction of Anglo-Jewish identity.

While Jacobs's article purports to be a "history" of Israel's religion, it also highlights Anglo-Jewish concerns that nineteenth-century biblical criticism is eroding the primacy of Israel's ties to divine revelation. His article parallels Arnold's Culture and Anarchy by its appeal to "science" in order to adequately study the "psychology of nations," and by its emphasis on Israel's unique role in religious history. Jacobs traces "the development of the religious conceptions of the children of Israel" by considering the process of "the cross-fertilization of national ideas," or in other words, how "the peculiar mental traits" of nations "are influenced by communication with the thoughts of other nations."³⁵ His first concern is to emphasize that the "origins of Hebraism" must be traced through the Hebrew Bible. Those interested in the God of

³⁴Joseph Jacobs, Literary Studies, 2d ed. (London: David Nutt, 1895), 94.

³⁵Joseph Jacobs, "The God of Israel: A History," The Nineteenth Century 6 (September 1879): 482.

Israel need to look exclusively at Hebrew history, rather than analyzing other Semitic groups in conjunction with a generalized religious history.

Jacobs's emphasis on the communication between races also functions to combat accusations of Jewish exclusivity. Like Arnold, Jacobs also assumes that there needs to be some type of mediation for different races to communicate. Arnold calls this mediating factor the "affinities" that serve to indicate the "essential unity of man" while Jacobs describes a process of assimilation that he terms "cross-fertilization." These accounts of "racial affinities" are necessary in order to demonstrate how Judaism's moral ideals are made available to other races. Thus Jacobs constructs a narrative describing how the Hebrew religion becomes accessible to other races through "the continual universalizing of the national God Jehovah."³⁶ His attempt to balance the "specific" with the "universal" is similar to Arnold's strategy of linking the abstraction of "doing" to the historically specific "Hebrews." By using this approach, Jacobs outlines a process whereby Judaism is tied to universal moral values as well as to the Jewish race.

In his description of the "interlaced development of Hebraism and Hellenism," Jacobs observes that "the most important problem of cross-fertilization in the history of the world's thought" is the degree to which "the Judaic Deity had

³⁶Ibid., 485.

to be Indo-Germanised or Hellenised before He could become the God of Aryan worship."³⁷ The "practical view of the Semite" had to be transformed "to metaphysical or speculative view of the Aryan."³⁸ This movement is not an example of progress but a necessary "appeal to Aryan egoism," or the individualistic nature of Hellenic psychology, and like Arnold, Jacobs draws attention to the contingencies of the Jewish relationship with other groups:

And indeed it is doubtful whether the Aryan mind has completely assimilated Hebraic righteousness. Only when it has the instinct to do right as right, apart from rewards and punishments...will the work of the Bible be done.³⁹

It is only after people have "thoroughly assimilated Hebraism" that "new developments of the Aryan (Hellenic) part of their nature is possible."⁴⁰ It is the corporate nature of the Hebraic that distinguishes it from the "individualistic" Hellene preoccupied with "doing as one likes." In this way, Hebraism is tied to the advancement of humanity by its ability to instill the "instinct to do right" even in racially distinct groups. The Semitic influence is necessary for the development of this "instinct," so that the contemporary Jew still has a mission to complete.

Furthermore, one of the major points of Jacobs's article

³⁷Ibid., 490.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., 501.

⁴⁰Ibid.

is to show that the Hebraic is responsible for the progress of Western civilization. The Hebraic is deemed the source of ordered conduct for civilization: "Or rather we may say that the views about conduct which the old Hebrews held in connection with their religious conceptions have become the moral or ideal views of conduct for the civilized world."⁴¹ While Arnold theorizes that "racial affinities" are responsible for the predominance of the Hebraic in England, Jacobs argues that "Hebraic opinions on social conduct" have become "the moral instincts of Humanity."⁴² Jacobs further clarifies these ideals as they appear in Arnold's work:

The 'strictness of conscience' was once the 'spontaneity of [the Hebrew] consciousness,' to apply Mr. Matthew Arnold's attempted distinction between Hebraism and Hellenism in the fourth chapter of his Culture and Anarchy. The glory of the Hebrews is not that they never had a 'tribal' God but that they held practical opinions in connection with religion which have become the ideal of civilized morality.⁴³

The "glory of the Hebrews" is that their religiosity could be divested of racial characteristics in order to serve as an universal model. Jacobs's argument depends on the balance of two points: that the Jews are the source of civilized morality, and that their sense of morality is not "tribal," or exclusively Semitic, but can be transformed into the "moral instincts of humanity." This also suggests a conception of

⁴¹Ibid., 485.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

the post-emancipation Jew who both recognizes his or her Hebraic origins and contributes to "secular society," as Jacobs himself does by writing English Fairy Tales (1890) and Literary Studies (1895).

This attempt to balance the racially specific tie to the Hebrews with the universal religiosity of "strictness of conscience" makes Arnold's work so appealing to Jacobs as he outlines the Jewish mission in Victorian society. Jacobs emphasizes that Jews could never accept Christianity "which is utterly alien to the Jewish Volksgeist, but it could clearly, without loss of historic dignity, advance to the new faith."⁴⁴ Faced with the pressures of assimilation and latent prejudices, Jacobs observes that "the great question for contemporary Judaism is whether it will continue God's work or cease to be."⁴⁵ He sees "no meaning in history if the richest product of humanity, which has shared in all progressive movements...shall not have within it germs of mighty thoughts and deeds [derived from Judaism]."⁴⁶ Judaism's distinctive place in the world's progress, and its future spiritual mission grows out of its historical role of spreading "civilizing morality." The ideas of "cross fertilization" and "Hebraism" are ultimately reduced to the question of Jewish participation in Western society. Like

⁴⁴Ibid., 503.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

Arnold, who argues that Jews are witnesses of morality, Jacobs also relies on an appeal to the historical mission of "civilizing." Thus the term Hebraism, identified as a vision of the ancient Hebrews, in Arnold's work, is continually interlaced with arguments for the contemporary Jewish mission so that the past and present are difficult to separate.

Discussions of Hebraism and its implications for Anglo-Jewish life in England are not limited to the periodical press but are also carried on other public forums. In 1893, Lucien Wolf (1857-1930) draws attention to the Hebraic tendencies of the English in his inaugural address to the Jewish Historical Society of England. Prompted by the success of the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition during Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations, Anglo-Jews founded this society "for the purpose of research in the history of the Jews in the British Empire."⁴⁷ Wolf served as its first president and was succeeded by a number of distinguished Anglo-Jews, including Hermann Adler, Claude G. Montefiore, and Joseph Jacobs. He actively supported a number of other Jewish causes by writing for the Jewish World, serving as secretary for the Jewish Board of Deputies, and editing a Jubilee edition of Benjamin Disraeli's novels in 1905.⁴⁸ While he worked extensively on behalf of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe, he was opposed

⁴⁷The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Jewish Historical Society of England," by Theodor H. Gaster.

⁴⁸This outline of Wolf's life is based on The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Wolf, Lucien," by Sanieł Labin.

to Jewish nationalism, or Zionism, because he felt that Jews must combat anti-Semitism by fighting for reforms in the countries in which they lived. He was also esteemed for his work as foreign affairs editor of the Daily Graphic, so that like Jacobs, he contributed to both Jewish and "secular" society.

Just as Jacobs opens his article with an argument for Israel's primacy in religious history, Wolf feels compelled not only to establish the connections between the Jewish and English past, but also to argue that Anglo-Jewish history must not be dismissed as insignificant. He refers to the readmission of the Jews to England after their expulsion in the seventeenth century as "the outcome of a series of events which neither the English nor the Anglo-Jewish historian can afford to ignore," because of its influence on British society.⁴⁹ To further support his own observations, Wolf adds:

From this point of view, in fact, a very large part of English history is said to belong to Jewish history. Matthew Arnold recognized this in one of the most suggestive chapters of his "Culture and Anarchy" when he sketched the struggle of Hellenism and Hebraism in England.⁵⁰

Wolf's reference to Arnold here is especially revealing because he uses Culture and Anarchy to argue for the

⁴⁹Lucien Wolf, "A Plea for Anglo-Jewish History, Inaugural Address," Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England 1 (1893-4): 4.

⁵⁰Ibid.

importance of Anglo-Jewish history to a Jewish audience. Arnold's idea of Hebraism seems to have established a set of connections between Jews and English society that help to rationalize the preservation of Anglo-Jewish history not only to non-Jews (as might be expected) but to the intellectual elite of the Jewish community as well. This seems to indicate both how Jews have assimilated "English" attitudes and values, and how Hebraism is identified with "Jewish" history.

In addition, Wolf calls for the study of Anglo-Jewish history as a way of exploring religious "affinities" and the "national psychology" that Arnold and Jacobs have alluded to in their discussion of Hebraism. He notes that "[a] direct Jewish element is not wanting in the review of English national psychology," and may be traced to the influence of the Hebrew Bible and Hebraism.⁵¹ Wolf uses Arnold's Hebraism and Hellenism as a guide to understanding the "national psychology":

That struggle which I prefer to call the struggle between the Old and New Testaments, is not only the key to English social and political process, but it also affords the explanation of the reversal by the English people in 1655 of the banishment which they decreed against the Jews three and a half centuries before.⁵²

He adds that the "popularization of the Old Testament" is responsible for this change because "the history of Israel had not only profoundly modified the religious thought of the

⁵¹Ibid., 5.

⁵²Ibid., 4.

country, but it had inspired a great struggle for political freedom and a great scheme of constitutional revision...."⁵³ Wolf also links the valuation of the Hebrew Bible to the political advances of England as well as to the toleration and stability of the Jewish community. He concludes his address with the hope that "our new organization will be a fruitful source of intellectual life and of virile Judaism to the great body of our English co-religionists."⁵⁴ In this way, the study of Anglo-Jewish history and its contribution to shaping the community's identity is inseparable from that of English institutions, just as Hebraism is an essential part of the English national psychology.

David Cesarani outlines a number of different ways in which Anglo-Jewish history was used to combat prejudices against the community that could equally be extended to some facets of Arnold's work. During the 1880s, Anglo-Jews constructed their history in response to the "anti-alienism" and the "strengthening of anti-Jewish currents in politics, society, and culture" so that it became "part of the weaponry used by English Jews in the struggle against exclusionary tendencies."⁵⁵ References to Arnold's work often function to

⁵³Ibid., 5.

⁵⁴Ibid., 7.

⁵⁵David Cesarani, "Dual Heritage or Duel of Heritages? Englishness and Jewishness in the Heritage Industry," in The Jewish Heritage in British History, ed. Tony Kushner (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 30.

lend support to Jewish arguments for such concerns as a need to study their own history, or the importance of the Hebraic influence in England. In his comments on Wolf's address, Cesarani notes: "Above all, Anglo-Jewish history demonstrated the empathy, even the symbiosis between Jewish Englishmen and Christian Englishmen who both centered their beliefs, religious and political, on the Old Testament."⁵⁶ In Literature and Dogma, Arnold also made a case for the study of the Hebrew Bible as tied to the moral progress of the country. This theme of "symbiosis" is carried into the political realm as well because "Anglo-Jewish history was intended to show rootedness of Jews in English society, their contribution to English life, and their patriotism," just as Jewish writers refer to "Hebraism" to establish its imprint on racial "affinities" and the "national psychology."⁵⁷

Yet, while Anglo-Jews have been shown to associate Hebraism with positive assessments of their religion and history, Culture and Anarchy contains several remarks that perpetuate traditional stereotypes. Arnold's comments about the relationship between Christianity and Judaism will be discussed in more detail later, but it should be pointed out that while he values the Hebraic "strictness of conscience," he also sees it and Judaism as mechanical and inflexible. The

⁵⁶Ibid., 34.

⁵⁷Ibid.

Jews are caught up in a network of "prescriptions,"⁵⁸ or slaves to "the inadequacy of the old rule of life."⁵⁹ Though he does not discuss nineteenth-century Judaism, his work implies that it has little to offer its adherents. This co-existence of 'intolerance' for Judaism and esteem for 'Hebraism' in Culture and Anarchy suggests the fragmented nature of Anglo-Jewish identity that is also illustrated by the names Hebrew, Jew, and Israelite.

Perhaps far more disturbing is the drama that unfolds in Culture and Anarchy as the reader learns that the Puritans have been misled by their Hebraic tendencies. The problem with the use of Hebraism in this context is that it is described in ways traditionally used to malign Jews, and as the opening of this chapter suggests, this difficulty is further compounded by the term's associated with the interchangeable use of the terms "Hebrew" and "Jew." The description of the Puritan fanatic, who is "a victim of Hebraism, of the tendency to cultivate strictness of conscience," unfortunately parallels the Jew blinded by rigid adherence to Mosaic Law.⁶⁰ When Arnold refers to the controversy over the issue of marriage to a deceased wife's sister, he demands to know: "who, that is not manacled and hoodwinked by his Hebraism, can believe that, as to love and

⁵⁸Arnold, Complete Prose Works, 5: 165.

⁵⁹Ibid., 5: 188.

⁶⁰Ibid., 5: 180.

marriage, our reason and the necessities of our humanity have their true...and divine law expressed for them by the voice of any Oriental and polygamous nation like the Hebrews?"⁶¹ Although Arnold may be referring to the Puritan's self-delusion, this narrative of the victim "hoodwinked by his Hebraism," draws on the long history of portraying Christians being swindled by Jews. This image parallels that of Christ as victim, and that of Gentiles duped by Jewish moneylenders. It also seems to contribute to the general paranoia about uncontrolled Jewish influence in English society. By describing the Nonconformists as "mechanistic" and "Hebraized," Arnold is also making them "Jews" in order to show how their behavior is undesirable. His use of these rhetorical strategies suggests that both Arnold and his readers share this ambivalent attitude toward the Jews that Cheyette has outlined in his study.

However, Arnold seems to have some misgivings about his own harsh criticism of Hebraism in "Our Liberal Practitioners." When he discusses the problem of overpopulation among the poor, he refers to people who have been encouraged to reproduce by "Hebraism, with that mechanical and misleading use of the letter of the scripture."⁶² He then goes on to distinguish "true Hebraism" from the "spurious Hebraism" or "unintelligent Hebraism" of the Liberals.

⁶¹Ibid., 5: 208.

⁶²Ibid., 5: 219.

Similarly, in his essay on "Heinrich Heine" (1863), Arnold initially quoted a passage from Heine's work that described "a public dispute...between a Jewish and a Christian champion." He quotes Heine's Jewish champion as saying such things as "our God loves music...but the sound of Church-bells he hates, as he hates the grunting of pigs."⁶³ Before the publication of this lecture in the Cornhill, Arnold and his editor decided to delete the entire passage because it was in "bad taste."⁶⁴

That so few Jewish writers refer to these stereotypical aspects of Arnold's work seems partly due to their tacit acceptance of his ideas as well as their tendency to redefine them to fit their needs. Both Jacobs and Wolf refer to Hebraism in their writings to further their arguments, or at least to modify his pronouncements. Just as Arnold argues that Puritans "hebraize," Israel Zangwill notes that Hebraism tends to a "narrow Puritanness" that Jews should avoid.⁶⁵ Zangwill changes the terminology but the idea of avoiding "narrowness" in favor of well-rounded "culture" remains the underlying assumption. Even though Arnold may seem ambivalent about the "racialized Jew" as Cheyette suggests, "Hebraism"

⁶³Matthew Arnold, Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1960-1977), vol. 3, Lectures and Essays in Criticism, 131.

⁶⁴Super provides this information in his editorial commentary. *Ibid.*, 3: 433.

⁶⁵Israel Zangwill, Speeches Articles and Letters of Israel Zangwill, ed. Edith Ayrton Zangwill (London: Soncino Press, 1937), 38.

still gained currency, especially among Jewish intellectuals who seem to be searching for ways to illustrate their connections to "English" values and culture.

In fact, Israel Zangwill himself feels that the identification of Hebraism with Judaism almost obscures their differences.⁶⁶ He attempts to clarify their relationship in a speech given at the Maccabaeian Dinner on November 13, 1992.⁶⁷ His comments suggest that in the process of anglicization nineteenth-century Jews have lost sight of their distinctiveness: "I am afraid too many Jewish reformers confound Judaism with Hebraism and think that Judaism is merely Christianity minus Christ."⁶⁸ While Judaism has much to offer by putting into practice Hebraic ideals, it has often

⁶⁶Israel Zangwill (1864-1926) is probably the most well-known Anglo-Jewish novelist and playwright of the nineteenth century. His works include Children of the Ghetto (1893), and The Melting Pot (1908). He was active in the Zionist Congress, but he eventually abandoned this cause to work for the establishment of a Jewish colony in Uganda. While he sometimes expressed ambivalent feelings towards his own Jewishness, Zangwill still believed that his religion could contribute to the well-being of humanity. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Zangwill, Israel," by Libby Benedict.

⁶⁷The Maccabaeian Club was established in 1891, and included mostly Jewish professionals. Its purpose was "to promote social intercourse and co-operation among its members for the purpose of advancing the interests of Jewry." This organization sponsored many charitable institutions as well as helped Theodor Hertzl present his ideas of a Jewish state to Jews in England. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "The Maccabaeans."

⁶⁸Zangwill, Speeches Articles and Letters, 35.

been "shockingly apt to get stereotyped and devitalized."⁶⁹ Zangwill appeals to the emancipated Jews in the club to work towards revitalizing Judaism as he himself attempts to do in his construction of a Jewish identity:

If I may make a distinction...between our triple names, Hebrew, Jew, and Israelite, the Hebrew is the idealist, the Jew the adherent of an historical system, and the Israelite the Jew by birth who may become the patriot and the nationalist; and the secret of all our discrepancies is, some of us are one and some two, and some all three of these things.⁷⁰

His construction of a Jewish identity not only highlights its distinctive qualities but also indicates its fragmentation, leading Zangwill to conclude that "the emancipated Jew has a far more complex problem to face than the emancipated Christian."⁷¹

While Zangwill sets out to distinguish Judaism from Hebraism, his address also shares a number of commonalities with Culture and Anarchy. Like Arnold, Zangwill looks to the timeless qualities of the Bible's moral teachings:

But the ideas of to-day are precisely the ideals of the Prophets and all the great Jews that ever lived--the eternal aspiration after truth and justice--and these ideals are the ideals of every man in this room, for

⁶⁹Zangwill assumes that Judaism is "devitalized" just as Arnold's Literature and Dogma assumes that Christianity is endangered by religious skepticism. His comments imply that he has internalized elements of the Christian conception of Judaism, but he is also expressing a genuine concern over the secularization of British society. There is some evidence to suggest synagogue attendance during the 1850s was low, but that it increased in the 1880s. Lipman, 28.

⁷⁰Zangwill, Speeches Articles and Letters, 37.

⁷¹Ibid.

Hebraism has conquered the civilised world....⁷²

He emphasizes the universalism of these "Hebrew ideals" which are "in the blood of every honorable man," thus assuring a "connectedness" between individuals. He adds that "Judaism is simply a concrete expression of the Hebrew ideals--not, perhaps, the only possible expression, but still the one which actually shaped itself in history."⁷³ Judaism as the "concrete expression of the Hebrew ideals" that has "conquered the civilised world" is not out of place in nineteenth-century society. In fact, Zangwill argues that "it is a sociological system, a way of living" able to "grapple honestly and wisely with many social problems."

He is also concerned with developing the intellectual qualities of his community, and like Arnold, deplores materialism and dogma. Zangwill observes that "on the side of art and general culture the Jew needs the most development," which seems to parallel Arnold's plea for the Hellenizing of the middle class. Arnold argues that the development of these qualities will produce classes better able to govern England. Zangwill sees this issue as equally important for Jews because it is tied to the community's survival in a post-emancipation society. Zangwill criticizes the "materialism" of Jews in particular, noting that as members of the Maccabaeans "we emphasize our disrespect for that alleged Jewish fetish,

⁷²Ibid., 34.

⁷³Ibid., 35.

money," and instead strive for ideals.⁷⁴ In addition, he points to the club's rejection of "dogma" which would undermine open discussion, and to its "construct[ion] on the latest, the most scientific principles." The group will pursue its "ideals," and confront intellectual issues of the day, in order to "protest against great medieval prejudices: the prejudice of the Christian against Jew, the prejudice of the Jew against the Christian, and the prejudice of both Jew and Christian against the free breath of science and the free play of thought."⁷⁵ In this way, Judaism will not yield to Christianity nor will it be displaced by Hellenism, but instead "conscience [will] be reconciled to culture."

Zangwill's overwhelming concern in distinguishing Hebraism from Judaism, and in outlining the goals of the Maccabaeian Club, is to ensure Jewish survival. He firmly believes that the "Jew, as well as the Hebrew, should have a finger in the making of this perfect human pie."⁷⁶ Thus Zangwill has attempted to define "Hebraism," a system of universal ideals, against Judaism so that the Jew, the adherent of the "religious system" is not left behind. Part of this is to be achieved by "intellectual" emancipation from dogmas, and the reconciliation of Hebraism and Hellenism in order to "revitalize" Judaism. His description of this

⁷⁴Ibid., 31.

⁷⁵Ibid., 34.

⁷⁶Ibid., 38.

process brings traditional Judaism in line with nineteenth-century ideas of "culture" and science, much like Arnold attempts to do with Christianity in Literature and Dogma.

In this chapter, I have analyzed how Arnold's term Hebraism is used by Jewish writers to either explore or construct an Anglo-Jewish identity. First, Arnold's universalist approach appeals to Jewish writers who are often forced into the position of combatting accusations of exclusiveness. It is also repeatedly invoked as a "proof" that the Jews as witnesses to "righteousness" need to remain a distinctive group in post-emancipation society, but because of the universality of their moral teachings, they are also not outside the general "culture." References to Hebraism, rather than imply that there is a consensus among Jews as to their role in society, often prompt debates over this issue. Such debates indicate that even with full legal rights the issue of Jewish "rootedness" in England is unresolved. Zangwill's anxiety about the Jew having "a finger in the making of this perfect human pie" further indicates this feeling of uncertainty.

The next chapter will discuss Arnold's description of the opposition existing between the "Hebraic" and the "Hellenic" in Culture and Anarchy. Zangwill and Wolf allude to this opposition as tied to the recognition of both Semitic contributions to civilization, and Jewish participation in post-emancipation society. As Hellenism becomes increasingly

identified with "culture," this dissociation threatens to place Jews outside of English society, fostering the continued struggle for dominance between those espousing the Hellenic and Hebraic causes.

CHAPTER VII

HELLENISM VERSUS HEBRAISM:

A STRUGGLE FOR CULTURAL DOMINANCE

In August of 1874, The Jewish Chronicle described the Greek persecution of Jews living in the Turkish empire as part of a series of articles entitled "Hebrews and Hellenes." Most Jews left Greece after a series of attacks on the community in the early part of the century, but those that remained in areas sympathetic to the Greeks continued to suffer persecution.¹ The animosity towards Levantine Jews in the nineteenth century was partly fueled by the tension between the Greeks and their Turkish oppressors. As N. M. Gelber explains, Turkey's liberal policy towards Jews contrasted with its oppressive treatment of Greek Christians, increasing the hostility between them.² The Jewish Chronicle referred here to a series of "blood accusations" leveled at Levantine Jews for allegedly murdering Christian children in order to obtain blood for their passover celebration. It expressed outrage that such accusations should be made to justify the assault

¹The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Anti-Semitism."

²Vicki Tamir refers to Gelber's work on this issue in Bulgaria and Her Jews: The History of a Dubious Symbiosis (New York: Sepher-Herman, 1979), 83.

and murder of Jews by Levantine Greeks.

In fact, The Jewish Chronicle brought this matter to the attention of the public not only to express its outrage but also in the hopes of influencing English sympathies. "Enlightened Christians" were urged to act on behalf of the Jews since "the time ha[d] arrived when energetic measures should be resorted to, to put an end to the outrages...."³ The English owned Levantine Herald had spoken on behalf of the Jews, because according to The Jewish Chronicle, "superior races [like the English] have always displayed more generosity and liberality towards the weak and oppressed than inferior races."⁴ The paper also made its plea to the "racially superior" and "enlightened" English Christians to intercede in the affairs of the Turkish empire on behalf of the Jews. As a result, the animosity between the Hebrews and Hellenes was ushered into the realm of British foreign policy.

While The Jewish Chronicle was initially concerned with drawing attention to political oppression in the East, the focus of its articles shifts to a more immediate interest of the English, the use of the classics. Political and scholarly issues become intertwined when the paper accounts for the longstanding hostility between the Hebrews and Hellenes:

Indeed, a spirit of antagonism has always reigned

³"Hebrews and Hellenes," The Jewish Chronicle, 9 October 1874, p. 446.

⁴"Hebrews and Hellenes," The Jewish Chronicle, 28 August 1874, p. 345.

between Hebrews and Hellenes. There has been an utter want of sympathy between these two branches of two distinct families of mankind, the Semitic and the Aryan. Their history, their traditions, their genius, their pursuits have been opposed to and have clashed with each other. It has been the fashion by some enthusiastic classical scholars to exalt Hellas at the expense of Israel; and by their rapt admiration...to undervalue systems of morals and philosophy conceived on a sounder and more extended basis....⁵

Such comments support Frank Turner's observation that Victorian criticism of Homer or, in this case, the classics illustrates "specifically nineteenth-century preoccupations."⁶ The articles appearing in The Jewish Chronicle provide an example of how the preoccupation over the relative merits of the Aryan and the Semite, and "culture" and religion, enter into the discussion of the Hebrew and Hellene. While the Greeks should be recognized for their excellence in the "plastic arts," philosophy, and advanced aesthetics, it is the Jews who should be credited with the highest development of morality, since Christianity as well as British institutions derive their moral framework from Semitic origins. "Enlightened Christians" who acknowledge the significance of the Hebraic to the moral development of Western civilization should also recognize the need to take political action on behalf of the Jews in the Levant. The significance assigned to the Hebraic and the Hellenic as participants in Western

⁵Ibid.

⁶Frank M. Turner, The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), 135.

civilization suggests that the political struggle in the East is being reenacted in England but in the form of scholarly debates.

Though published several years before The Jewish Chronicle articles, Culture and Anarchy also discusses a power struggle between Hebraism and Hellenism for dominance in Western civilization. Arnold describes their relationship as one of rivalry: "And these two forces we may regard them as in some sense rivals--not by necessity of their own nature, but as exhibited in man and his history--and rivals dividing the empire of the world between them."⁷ The attraction of humanity is either to the Hellenic or the Hebraic, but it is seldom, if ever, balanced. This imbalance is most frequently the result of "rhetorical purposes," since "the speaker's whole design is to exalt and enthrone one of the two, and he uses the other only as foil and to enable him the better to give effect to his purpose."⁸ According to Arnold, most often "Hellenism...is thus reduced to minister to the triumph of Hebraism," but this comment applies largely to debates involving the Non-conformists and their conservative religious views.⁹ The Jewish Chronicle exemplifies how Hebraism is also "reduced to minister" to Hellenism with the characterization of the Semite as inferior to the Aryan.

⁷Arnold, Complete Prose Works, 5: 163.

⁸Ibid., 5: 164.

⁹Ibid., 5: 164.

The texts produced by both The Jewish Chronicle and Arnold indicate that debates over the classics are intimately connected to those over religion. In the course of these debates, the relationship between the Hellenic and the Hebraic as well as the Jew and the Christian are repeatedly defined and reassessed. The need to determine whether "Greek culture" or "Hebrew religion" underwrites Western civilization leads to a series of "narratives" that attempt to account for its origins, but also work to position the Jew in post-emancipation society. For example, if Christianity with its Semitic origins forms the basis of Western civilization, then this functions as proof of a Jewish or Semitic presence in European history. An alternative scheme assigns Greece with its Aryan nature a formative role in the development of Western civilization so that the Jews are outsiders, who are neither racially compatible with the Indo-European nor have contributed to cultural development. This struggle between "culture" and "religion" becomes so widely debated that it culminates in what S. H. Butcher considers the most pressing issue of the period:

The two tendencies summed up in the words Hebraism and Hellenism are often regarded as opposing and irreconcilable forces....Yet harmonised they can and must be. How to do so is one of the problems of modern civilization;--how we are to unite the dominant Hebrew idea of a divine law...with the Hellenic conception of human energies...how life may gain unity without incurring the reproach of onesidedness; how, in a word,

Religion may be combined with Culture.¹⁰

As The Jewish Chronicle indicates, the English recognition of Israel's "morals and philosophy" has to varying degrees determined the status and treatment of Jews.

This chapter will analyze how Arnold's conception of Hellenism functions to accommodate the Anglo-Jew by contextualizing his work in the larger nineteenth-century debate over the valuation of the classics and religion. I will argue that certain Anglo-Jewish intellectuals came to identify the assimilation of "Hellenic" qualities as necessary for the post-emancipation Jew's participation in the ongoing development of Western society. In this context, Culture and Anarchy provides an useful model for a Jewish approach to the integration of the Hellenic and Hebraic. The significance of Arnold's work in this process can be better understood once it is contrasted with other versions of Hellenism such as that of William Gladstone's. Such a comparison will help identify the ideological implications of the struggle between the classics and religion for Anglo-Jews, and it will also highlight aspects of Arnold's work that attracted the attention of Jewish intellectuals such as Claude Montefiore.

Anglo-Jewish interest in Gladstone's views on the classics is prompted by his ties to institutional power and

¹⁰S. H. Butcher, Some Aspects of Greek Genius (New York: MacMillan, 1893), 45-6.

his numerous publications.¹¹ Besides serving in various governmental posts, he repeatedly held office as a Member of Parliament, and was elected Prime Minister for four terms. Since his studies often appeared while in office, his ideas were frequently before the public as those of Gladstone, the politician and the scholar. His publication of Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age (1858) reputedly influenced Sir Edward Lytton's decision to send Gladstone on a diplomatic mission to their Ionian Islands in order to persuade the government to remain under British rule.¹² When he gave the valedictory speech "Address on the Place of Ancient Greece" (1865) to students at the University of Edinburgh, he was Chancellor of Exchequer, and Juventus Mundi (1869) was published during his first ministry. The sheer number of studies that Gladstone published on the classics would also seem to lend authority to his claims. As Turner notes, Gladstone continued to produce scholarly studies of Homer and the Greeks from 1847 to 1898, resulting in seven volumes on Homer, and a number of articles which makes his the "most extensive body of Victorian Homeric commentary."¹³

Furthermore, Gladstone was not only interested in the

¹¹Turner, 64. He also observes noting that the works about ancient Greece and Rome are particularly noteworthy because of the social position of the writers who produced them.

¹²DNB, s.v. "Gladstone, William Ewart."

¹³Turner, 159.

role that the classics should play in education, but he was able to implement some of his ideas. He actively worked for curriculum reforms at Oxford that would balance the study of the classics with that of Christianity. His participation in this reform resulted in the Oxford Examination Statute of 1850 that made Homer a required author for the moderations examinations taken after two years in college.¹⁴ Not only was a knowledge of the classics necessary to enter Oxford and Cambridge, but "from the mid-century onward the civil service examinations which led to government posts favoured persons well-trained in the ancient languages."¹⁵ While these changes did not explicitly exclude Jews, they were aimed at preserving an "educated elite." Such requirements limited Jewish access to "government posts," since the attendance of professing Jews at major English universities (where classical studies were emphasized) was relatively low until the passage of the University Test Act in 1871. This association between the classics and institutional power further suggests the need for Jews to resolve the "antagonism" between the "Hebraic" and the "Hellenic" in order for them to fully participate in post-emancipation society.

Gladstone's publications on the relationship between the ancient Greeks and religious history specifically functioned

¹⁴Ibid., 162.

¹⁵Turner, "Why the Greeks and not the Romans in Victorian Britain?" 63.

to exclude the Jew from both the past and future development of Western society. Turner provides an important analysis of Gladstone's use of the classics to limit the Hebrew Bible's influence on secular areas of Victorian life. Gladstone's narrative of religious history made it "essential to their covenanted role that the ancient Hebrew nation not contribute to the achievement of intellectual, artistic, or material progress," so that it was impossible for Hebraism to contribute "to the more general secular development of human culture."¹⁶ He also points out that Gladstone limited the Hebrew Bible to the concerns over human salvation so that "the natural achievements of the Greeks appear prescriptively adequate for temporal life."¹⁷ According to Turner, Gladstone's primary concern was to demonstrate how the classics could enrich human life, but in doing so, he effectively denied the possibility of Jewish contributions to society.

In fact, his work most strongly contrasts with Arnold's when he denies that the Hebrews were the sole recipients of divine revelation. The Study of Homer illustrates how Gladstone recognizes the moral value and beauty of the Greek religion while at the same time, allowing it to usurp the Jews' claim that they alone had knowledge of the coming Messiah. He argues that the Homeric poems provide evidence

¹⁶Turner, The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain, 168-9.

¹⁷Ibid., 170.

that the Greeks also had such insights:

Few, comparatively, have been inclined to recognize in the Homeric poems the vestiges of a real traditional knowledge, derived from the epoch when the covenant of God with man, and the promise of a Messiah, had not yet fallen within the contracted forms of Judaism for shelter, but entered more or less into the common consciousness....¹⁸

The Homeric poems exhibit "traces of the religion under which the patriarchs lived" that had been conveyed to the Greeks independent of Hebrew traditions.¹⁹ These ancient "traces" of the patriarch's religion "must have decayed and disappeared...by a gradual accumulation of corrupt accretions." The failure of others to recognize these elements of divine revelation in the Greek religion is the result of "a sinister bias," perpetuated by Jews, that has limited the study of the Hebrew Bible.

In addition to denying the Hebraic claim to divine revelation, Gladstone also uses Hellenism to systematically purge Christianity of its Semitic origins and constructs an alternative narrative describing its Aryan origins. In Juventus Mundi, he begins to undermine the exclusive historical connection between Judaism and Christianity by arguing that Aryan mythology contains traditions similar to those found in the Bible:

Many elements of Hebrew traditions recorded in the Holy Scriptures, or otherwise preserved among the Jews down to

¹⁸William Ewart Gladstone, Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1858), 2: 3.

¹⁹Ibid., 2: 4.

later times, appear in the Olympian Court of Homer....Further, in the characters where the features corresponding with Hebrew traditions mainly appear, there is a peculiar elevation of tone, and a remarkable degree of reverence is maintained towards them....²⁰

While admitting his uncertainty about "the channel of communication through which these traditions were conveyed into Greece," Gladstone identifies "correspondences" between the Greek religion and Christianity, such as the characteristics of the Messiah, the mother of God, and the conception of Logos. Gladstone concludes from his analysis of the "ancient traces" that the Homeric religion is "a true theology falsified."²¹

The Jewish Chronicle's reviews of Gladstone's publications are significant here because they provide valuable information about how his use of the Hellenic posed a threat to Jewish identity. In addition, they also indirectly suggest how Arnold's characterization of Hellenism as well as Hebraism accommodated a Jewish audience. While the paper attributes its interest in "Address on the Place of Ancient Greece"²² to "the importance of the subject discussed and the originality of the views expressed," it is primarily concerned with "the high social position of the propounder of

²⁰William Ewart Gladstone, Juventus Mundi (London: Macmillan, 1869), 207.

²¹Gladstone, The Study of Homer, 2: 8-9.

²²William Ewart Gladstone, "Address on the Place of Ancient Greece in the Providential Order of the World," Speech delivered before the University of Edinburgh on 3 November 1865 (London: John Murray, 1865).

the thesis so ably defended," and the influence Gladstone's social position may have on the spread of his ideas.²³ The paper makes this concern even more explicit in a review of "Courses of Religious Thought": "Mr. Gladstone enjoys such a well-deserved prominent position in public opinion, and is such a powerful writer, every one of whose statements carries such weight that his utterances merit to be examined."²⁴ Consequently, Gladstone's views on Hellenism are not seen as benign speculations but are identified as having the ability to influence public opinion and in this way, obtrude upon the reputation of the Jewish community.

The Jewish Chronicle responds to Gladstone's theories of religious history not only to oppose his position, and offer corrections but also to "ventilate the theory of Judaism before the world," so that the reader is not misled by such works.²⁵ Its attacks on Gladstone's works generally focus on three areas: reminding the reader of the Greeks' immoral practices, reaffirming the Semitic basis of Christianity, and highlighting the dangers of this speculation in an age of religious skepticism. However, these pre-occupations also

²³Review of "The Place of Ancient Greece in the Providential Order of the World," by William E. Gladstone, The Jewish Chronicle and the Hebrew Observer, 24 November 1865, p. 4.

²⁴Review of "The Courses of Religious Thought," by William E. Gladstone, The Jewish Chronicle, 30 June 1876, p. 203.

²⁵Review of Juventus Mundi, by William E. Gladstone, The Jewish Chronicle, 8 June 1870, p. 7.

suggest the ways in which Arnold's Culture and Anarchy differs from Gladstone's assessment of the Hellenic. Arnold encourages the adoption of "spontaneity of consciousness" that he sees as characterizing the Greeks, but he never allows Hellenism to supersede the moral authority of the Hebraic. His later religious prose emphasizes the primacy to the Hebraic in religious development, and he also advocates returning to the Hebrew Bible for continuing spiritual renewal. Like The Jewish Chronicle, Arnold acknowledges that Christianity has intimate ties to the Hebraic.

The Jewish Chronicle attempts to re-establish the moral authority of the Hebraic in its reviews of Gladstone's work. In a review of the "Address on the Place of Greece," The Jewish Chronicle divests the Hellenic of almost any claim to morality, noting that with the exception of Homer's era, "the Greece of Augustus and the Hellenism of Asia and Africa were religiously the seat of the grossest superstition and morality of the darkest vices."²⁶ It also strategically distances the Greek religion from the development of Christianity by advocating the historical study of Alexandrian Jews "in order to show that it was not pagan Greece, but Greek speaking Jews, who laid the foundation upon which the structure of Christianity was erected in after ages."²⁷ However, the reviewer does concede that "what Greece really did for the

²⁶Review of "The Place of Ancient Greece," 4.

²⁷Ibid., 5.

spread of Christianity was, that it offered to the apostles a language then understood by the educated throughout the Roman, and consequently civilised world."²⁸ The apostles found in the Greek language a "flexible idiom" that could clearly express the idea of the "new religion." The Hellenic simply becomes the vehicle for the spread of Christianity with its Semitic origins. Such an argument has multiple implications for the relationship of the Jew to England, since the English Christian and the Jew share a religious history no matter how different their respective faiths have become.

The Jewish Chronicle also attacks Gladstone for his failure to recognize Christianity's Semitic origins as well as for his use of Hellenism to usurp them. A reviewer of Juventus Mundi specifically criticizes him for "exalt[ing] Christianity on an Aryan basis":

The theory, which is an endeavour to exalt Christianity on an Aryan basis, has given an undue place of prominence to the doctrines of Aryan mythology and Aryan social philosophy, utterly ignoring the world-commanding influence of the Semitic race, its works, its deeds, its powers.²⁹

By "ignoring the world-commanding influence" of the Semite, Gladstone overlooks the ways in which the "Semitic" or the "Hebraic" morality informs British institutions, thus weakening the ties between the Jews and England. Recognized as guardians and heirs of the Hebrew Bible, and Semitic

²⁸Ibid., 4.

²⁹Review of Juventus Mundi, 7.

precursors of the morality of the New Testament, Jews could not only argue for their contribution to Christian history, but also for their role as the living representatives of the Mosaic code.

However, The Jewish Chronicle is cautious with the parallels it draws between Jewish and Christian history, since it seems to detect what Arnold calls "Aryan metaphysics" in Gladstone's studies. It is careful to distinguish Judaic "monotheism" from Gladstone's analysis of Homeric religion by stressing that "unity" is the "essence" of the Jewish view of God, and that the teachings of Christianity itself could lead to his conclusions. From Gladstone's "Christian point of view," the Old and New Testaments are seen as "intimately blended" so that "no sooner does the unity disappear and the Trinity take its place, than...the link between the Triune of Christianity and the contemporaneous existence of Zeus, Poseidon and Pluto flashes into view."³⁰ His theories about the Homeric religion seem to be fostered by Christianity's insistence on the Trinity. In fact, The Jewish Chronicle uses Gladstone to exemplify those "metaphysical" weaknesses in Christianity that Judaic "monotheism" avoids.

The paper also considers Gladstone's work as particularly troubling because his "dangerous speculation" only seems to encourage the religious "skepticism" that it sees emerging in Victorian society. In an argument that parallels Arnold's

³⁰Ibid.

objections to Bishop Colenso's study of the Hebrew Bible, The Jewish Chronicle believes that the publication of such ideas will only contribute to the further erosion of religious faith. The public will be led to believe that "there is in Aryan philosophy something coeval or coordinate with Semitic revelation" that lessens "not its dignity only, but its sole and unparalleled sanctity."³¹ Such "dangerous speculation" will not only undermine the Jewish claim for the "unparalleled sanctity" of "Semitic revelation," but it may also encourage readers to put their faith in false prophets. Consequently, Gladstone's theories have profound implications for Christianity as well as for British institutions that are frequently identified as deriving their moral basis from the Bible. These reviews of Gladstone's work demonstrate how the relative "contributions" of the Hebraic, Hellenic, and Christian are continually being evaluated in order to determine the sources of British moral codes and Western civilization. They also reveal how the valuation of each functions to define the relationship of Jews to British society as well.

The Jewish Chronicle's reviews of Gladstone's work indirectly suggest why Anglo-Jews found Arnold's conception of Hellenism more accommodating. Arnold's views were also useful because he was in a position of institutional power as school inspector, and because his literary publications gained him

³¹Ibid.

recognition as a cultural critic. In addition, Arnold often expressed his views on the classics in conjunction with his "official" positions. For example, Arnold's theory of Hellenism grows out of his last lecture, "Culture and Its Enemies," given as Oxford Poetry Chair. Park Honan comments that "when his lecture appeared in the July Cornhill, there was an uproar that lasted for the rest of the year."³² While much of the criticism centered on the feeling that Arnold favored "culture" over religion, his comments on Hellenism received a great deal of attention as well.

Arnold's views of Hellenism are not just those of a literary or cultural critic, but they are also those of a professional educator. In fact, Arnold was elected to his lectureship at Oxford while still a school inspector, so it is not surprising to find discussions of the classics and "culture" in his educational writings. In the conclusion of "Schools and Universities on the Continent," Arnold sees the instruction in Latin grammar and composition as valuable for promoting "exact habits of mind."³³ He argues against the assumption that the "spirit and power" of Greek and Latin literatures can only be reached through "philological studies." The value of studying these literatures is to gain

³²Honan, 347.

³³Matthew Arnold, Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1960-77), vol. 4, Schools and Universities on the Continent, 295.

an understanding of the "power of antiquity" because "what else is to be got out of it,--the love of the things of the mind, the flexibility, the spiritual moderation,--is for our present time and needs still more precious...."³⁴ Arnold never seems to abandon this position as evidenced by a much later essay "Literature and Science" (1882) that responds to Thomas Henry Huxley's argument for the study of science. For Arnold, ideals and a certain frame of mind are the true legacy of the classics:

When I speak of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, therefore, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, I mean more than a knowledge of so much vocabulary, so much grammar....I mean knowing the Greeks and Romans, and their life and genius...what we get from them, and what is its value.³⁵

While Arnold advances his theories of Hellenism, he does so as a representative of institutional power and as a professional educator whose work as school inspector has been the topic of his own publications.

Though The Jewish Chronicle never reviews Culture and Anarchy, it nonetheless recognizes Arnold's dual role as inspector and critic. The paper specifically mentions his public prominence as a reason for its later review of Arnold's translation of Isaiah:

Any work that bears in its title page the name of Matthew Arnold cannot fail to be recieved with consideration by

³⁴Ibid., 4: 297.

³⁵Matthew Arnold, Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960-77), vol. 10, Philistinism in England and America, 57-8.

the literary republic of which he is a so eminent a member. Assuredly a work bearing his name must be welcomed with special attention by the Jewish community, with which Mr. Arnold has been so frequently--and may we add agreeably--brought to contact, during his long service as one of the Government education Inspectors.³⁶

Such comments indicate the community's awareness of Arnold's official role while also highlighting his "agreeable" contact with the Jewish community as a reason for acknowledging his work. They further exemplify how the biographical details of Arnold's life shape the Jewish response to his literary works.

While Gladstone uses the classics to usurp or exclude the Hebraic, Arnold argues that the Hellenic functions as a "supplement" to the "strictness of conscience" of the Hebrews. Lambropoulos identifies the Hellenic "as the supplementary beauty and supporting knowledge of the Hebraic":

In all cases, the Hebraic is the modern--the modernist, the middle class, the moral, soul, progress, utopia, God; and the Hellenic is its different--its negative, its other, its supplement, its plentitude, its waste; its debauchery...its dis-interest, its dis-sent, its dissonance.³⁷

By assigning Hellenism a "supplementary" role and one that can even be characterized by "its debauchery," Arnold preserves the role of the Hebrew, the Semite, as representative of religious morality. He exemplifies this point by describing the "Renaissance," a time when Hellenism flourished, as revealing "a side of moral weakness and of relaxation or

³⁶Review of "The Prophecy of Israel's Restoration (Isaiah Chapters 40-66)," translated by Matthew Arnold, The Jewish Chronicle, 14 June 1872, p. 153.

³⁷Lambropoulos, 189.

insensibility of the moral fibre."³⁸ Hebraism was needed to counteract this weakness, though for Victorians it has become an overwhelming force. Unlike Gladstone, Arnold's scheme of human development prevents the Hebraic from being usurped or excluded by the Hellenic.

While attention to morality should never be abandoned, Arnold stresses the need to develop other facets of human nature. He emphasizes that both Hebraism and Hellenism are "but a contribution" to the "whole development of man."³⁹ They strive for "man's perfection" but "they both pursue this aim by very different courses" that should in proper balance be complementary. He explains "that the bent of Hellenism is to follow, with flexible activity, the whole play of universal order" through the "spontaneity of consciousness."⁴⁰ His definition of Hellenism emphasizes a state of mind, rather than simply an assessment of the contributions of ancient Greece to Western society:

To get rid of one's ignorance, to see things as they are, and by seeing them as they are to see them in their beauty, is the simple and attractive ideal which Hellenism holds out before human nature; and from the

³⁸Arnold, Complete Prose Works, 5: 173.

³⁹Ibid., 5: 171.

⁴⁰As this discussion points out, Arnold's description of "Hellenizing" in Culture and Anarchy involves more than simply studying the Classics. It also includes adopting a certain frame of mind, or "spontaneity of consciousness." I have tried to limit my usage of the term to this conception wherever it has been possible to do so, but there are places in this discussion where the two definitions overlap. Ibid., 5: 165.

simplicity and charm of this ideal, Hellenism, and human life in the hands of Hellenism, is invested with a kind of aerial ease, clearness, and radiancy; they are full of what we call sweetness and light.⁴¹

Although his work tends to stereotype the Greek as having lax morals, this description of Hellenism may be easily abstracted for use in a variety of different contexts, and it has the potential to accommodate Jewish writers interested in arguing that Jews need to obtain a broader knowledge of "culture." Arnold also stresses that "Hellenism may bring new life and movement into that side of us with which alone Hebraism concerns itself....Hellenism may thus actually serve to further the designs of Hebraism."⁴² As Lambropoulos further explains, "Hellenism will supplement, temper, and balance the excesses of Hebraism, and will preserve its essence intact."⁴³

This balance between Hebraism and Hellenism also implies that both the Semite and the Aryan have made significant contributions to Western civilization. The Greeks contribute to the intellectual and aesthetic progress of humanity and the Hebrews to its moral progress. The participation of each is not only guaranteed but necessary as The Jewish Chronicle explains "that even as in days of yore so even now...every race and every people and every creed has its part assigned

⁴¹Ibid., 5: 167.

⁴²Ibid., 5: 187.

⁴³Lambropoulos, 184.

which it must act on the stage of the world...."⁴⁴ Arnold's work does little to challenge this assumption rather he seems to further insist on it. Though this may be a limited view of both groups, it works to preserve a set of relations that Anglo-Jews have used to explain their presence in British culture and their ties to England.

To a lesser degree than either Arnold or Gladstone, Claude Montefiore (1858-1939) advocates the study of the classics by specifically considering the value of Hellenism for the post-emancipation Jew. Montefiore was a prominent, if not controversial, figure whose life embodied what seemed to be the best of both "English" and "Jewish" worlds in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. His family was among the Jewish "aristocracy" having settled in London in 1752.⁴⁵ Moses Montefiore, his grand uncle, was one of the most prominent members of the Jewish community and won acclaim from Jews and non-Jews for his philanthropy. Montefiore's education combined both secular English and religious Jewish studies. After studying at Oxford and being deeply influenced by the teachings of Benjamin Jowett, he went to the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin to be trained in Jewish theology. He never became a rabbi, but he was an

⁴⁴Review of "The Place of Ancient Greece," 4.

⁴⁵This sketch of Montefiore's life is drawn from The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Montefiore, Claude Joseph Goldsmid," by Paul Goodman.

active member in the Jewish community, and often preached lay sermons. He founded the Jewish Quarterly Review, a journal of Jewish scholarship, and wrote numerous books including Bible for Home Reading (1899-1900) and Liberal Judaism (1903). His reputation as a biblical scholar resulted in an invitation to deliver the Hibbert Lectures in 1892; he was the first Jew to do so.⁴⁶ He organized a progressive religious group calling itself Liberal Judaism, and in 1911, he served as the first president of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue. Although members of his community criticized his conciliatory approach towards Christianity, Eugene Black notes:

[he] left his greatest mark as spokesman for advanced liberal Jewish theology, as a leader in movements for communal education, as a moral crusader and as an outspoken British patriot. Combining in himself the Sephardic and Ashkenazic traditions, this pioneer of Jewish theology and reform and modernization strove without hesitation to realize...the concept of the English Jew.⁴⁷

Montefiore did not have the political connections to British institutions that Gladstone and Arnold did, but he was a Jewish communal leader. Montefiore urges Jews to study the classics, and he attempts to exemplify how Jewish beliefs may be "reconciled" with Hellenism.

⁴⁶The Jewish Chronicle published reports on these addresses, and lends them its approval by acknowledging that "Mr. Montefiore writes with a width and depth of knowledge of current theology" that is possessed by few other Jews at this time. "The Hibbert Lectures: A Retrospect," The Jewish Chronicle 10 June 1892, p. 11.

⁴⁷Eugene C. Black, The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880-1920 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 22.

Although "Liberal Judaism and Hellenism" (1918) does not appear until the early twentieth century, it provides an important glimpse of a Jewish intellectual struggling with the integration of the Hebraic and Hellenic. Like Arnold, Montefiore sees Hellenism as an antidote to nineteenth-century materialism by instilling a sense of beauty or good taste. Hellenizing would especially benefit "the Jews of the West [who] have not yet quite shed...a certain Oriental weakness for luxury, expense, and excess."⁴⁸ In addition, Judaism needs to demonstrate its affinity to Western civilization which Hellenic ideas have informed:

Liberal Judaism desires to take its place as a genuine religion of the Western world. Jews are not alien Easterns in America and Europe. Their religion claims no exotic, no alien eccentricity. It wants to be at home in Europe and America, and to grow there....If that be so, Judaism must think out and determine its relation to Hellenism. Within the limits of truth and of its own self consistency Liberal Judaism must hellenise. No religion can live in the Western world which has not settled accounts with Hellenism, and absorbed and adopted something of the Hellenic spirit.⁴⁹

While Montefiore does not explicitly address the "condition of England" question, he does argue that the welfare and survival of the Jewish community, the "condition of Anglo-Jewry," is tied to the mastery of the classics because "Western mankind" constantly returns to the "written sources" of both the Hebraic and the Hellenic. These texts, including the

⁴⁸Claude G. Montefiore, Liberal Judaism and Hellenism and Other Essays (London: MacMillan, 1918), 209.

⁴⁹Ibid., 190.

Prophets, Gospels, and Plato, "are the two chief roots of our civilization, and from these roots Western humanity will long...continue to draw spiritual nurture and refreshment."⁵⁰ The post-emancipation Jew needs to "settle accounts with Hellenism" not only to demonstrate a "spiritual" kinship, but to prevent the association of the Jews and Judaism with what is "alien" to the West. Attention to the Hellenic will dispel the image of "alien eccentricity" just as Hebraism does with its emphasis on Jewish "rootedness" in England.

Montefiore is also concerned with showing his readers how Hellenism can function as a supplement not just to the "Hebraic" but to specifically Jewish teachings. Like Wolf and Zangwill, he is forced to address Arnold's ideas even if he is not in total agreement with them. He is particularly concerned about Arnold's characterization of Hellenism and Hebraism as opposing forces:

I am not thinking primarily of any reconciliation of Hellenism with Judaism in the sense that Judaism is to stand for religion and morality, and Hellenism for art and culture. Nor am I even primarily thinking of Judaism and Hellenism in the sense in which Matthew Arnold was wont to contrast Hellenism and Hebraism with each other, and to discuss the amalgamation of the two. One or two of the things he alludes to, some of the points which he makes, may be touched upon or included in that which I have to say, but primarily I intend something rather different.⁵¹

Rather than essentialize the Hellenic and the Hebraic, Montefiore discusses "religion on both sides" in order to

⁵⁰Ibid., 191.

⁵¹Ibid., 183.

determine the moral as well as the aesthetic qualities that may best supplement Jewish thought. He argues against the limited conception that "Israel was chosen to teach the world religion, Rome to give it law, and Greece to reveal it art."⁵² His purpose is to show that "Greece too, as well as Israel, made its contribution towards religion. Israel gave more, but Greece gave something; and if Greece has to learn from Israel, Israel has something to learn from Greece."⁵³ In this way, he breaks down the opposition between the Hellenic and the Hebraic, so that the Jewish and the Greek contributions to Western civilization can be considered as multifaceted. While his essay draws on ideas that have found expression in both Gladstone's and Arnold's works, he specifically considers how they can enrich Jewish religious experience.

Like Gladstone, Montefiore acknowledges that moral teachings can be found in the texts belonging to the Greeks, or in the Hellenic. He agrees with Gladstone's contention that the "greatness of man" receives more emphasis in the Greeks, but he does not see this perspective as usurping or displacing the Jewish religion. While he recognizes the possibility of similarities between the Greek and Hebrew religions that are outlined in Gladstone's work, he also points out that these issues need more clarification. The

⁵²Ibid., 124.

⁵³Ibid., 185.

likelihood of "a kinship" between the Hebrew and Hellene seems to be demonstrated in the evolution of Christianity: "But Christianity could not have undergone this infiltration and assimilation [of Hellenic ideals] if there had not been a certain kinship, or if there had been too great a distance, between the Greek and the Jew."⁵⁴ Montefiore argues that this "kinship" indicates "why it is useful for the Jew to learn the teaching of the Greeks: he can always find connections for it in his own writings."⁵⁵ Epictetus and the other Stoics are the best suited to the study of the classics for religious purposes since they focus on ethical issues. Montefiore's argument is important because the Greeks are frequently viewed as underwriting or influencing not only Christianity but Western civilization so to ignore these interconnections would have effectively isolated Jews. Furthermore, Greek learning underwrote education and other aspects of high culture so that this interconnection not only suggests the possible interchange of ideas but the "fitness" of Jews to participate in this culture.

While his emphasis on the richness of Greek moral and religious thought is similar to Gladstone's, Montefiore's language and interest in the "supplementary" nature of the Hellenism closely parallels Arnold's Culture and Anarchy. He refers to Arnold as he urges his readers to pay close

⁵⁴Ibid., 189.

⁵⁵Ibid., 206.

attention to the characteristics of Greek thought:

And here [in reason and ethics] there is much to learn from the Greeks. Here may be brought in all that "sweetness and light" which to Matthew Arnold seemed so characteristic of Hellenism. And of higher Greek thought, and of certain nobler manifestations of Greek life, we may truly say that Arnold is right.⁵⁶

Hellenism will forward the goals of Hebraism because "the thought, as expressed in Greek, fortifies and illumines the same thought expressed in the Hebrew."⁵⁷ On the question of the morality of the soul, Montefiore argues that "when we read Plato, we find the Greek supplements the Hebrew," so that the Greek ideas can be "added on to our own moral and religious store."⁵⁸ "Sweetness and light" or that flexibility of mind advocated by Arnold allows Jewish readers to find in Greek writings those ideas that will help further "strengthen," "supplement," or better "illumine" what is already apart of Jewish tradition. Like Arnold, Montefiore recognizes the "supplementary" role of the Hellenic in "so far as religion is concerned we shall go to Greece, and find a supplement to the Eighth Psalm," but this will never usurp the primacy of the Hebraic.⁵⁹

In addition, Hellenism will help revitalize Judaism in this supplementary role by offering fresh insights into

⁵⁶Ibid., 198.

⁵⁷Ibid., 187.

⁵⁸Ibid., 221.

⁵⁹Ibid., 228.

traditional Jewish teachings and worship. It will help improve Jewish worship by encouraging the development of "aesthetically pleasing" services. Montefiore's criticism of Jewish services parallels that of Arnold's assessment of English hymns as gaining from the attention to beauty that is so characteristic of Greek thought. Here, as in the question of ethics and taste, Montefiore sees the Greek as providing a stronger emphasis on balance:

Liberal Judaism has exalted the ideals of reasonableness and beauty....It has sought to put into the worship of the Synagogue order and proportion...to make the services reverent and beautiful, in other words to unite Hellenism to Hebraism.⁶⁰

Liberal Judaism has sought to reverse the decline in the beauty of the services that occurred "when Hellenism has been cast out and condemned."⁶¹ In this passage, Montefiore advocates the balance of the Hellenic and Hebraic as well as suggests that these ideals have practical applications for Jewish worship in the synagogue. Montefiore does not see the changes that he proposes as compromising Anglo-Jewish identity or traditions, but as illustrating the vitality of Judaism. He insists that Liberal Judaism "is still alive and it still can learn and absorb and expand."⁶² Hellenism and Hebraism are a state of mind and faith, not birth, so that Jews may enrich their intellectual endeavors while "for religious

⁶⁰Ibid., 201.

⁶¹Ibid., 201.

⁶²Ibid., 189.

purposes we maintain our self-identity and our separateness."⁶³

However, Montefiore's interest in Hellenism is also tied to the political stability of the community as well as to the enrichment of the intellectual and aesthetic experience of Jewish worship. Hellenism needs to be recognized by Jews because it will make them better citizens, more compatible with an "English" outlook and better able to support British institutions, so that they need to "settle their accounts" with Hellenism and to be "at home" in Western civilization.⁶⁴

And in the second place remember that national religions are incongruous with modern civilization....The more Eastern and oriental our religion is in forms and customs, the more it plays into the hands of Anti-Semites....the more handle you give to the attacks of our enemies, the less chance you afford for the propagation of the true Jewish religion.⁶⁵

The phenomenon described here is more complicated than making Jews acceptable by Hellenizing them and downplaying their role as the racial "Other." Hellenism is used by Montefiore to alter Jewish attitudes, often attitudes drawn from non-Jews about Judaism, so as to stimulate a renewed interest in religion by making it more appealing to acculturated or anglicized Jews. He offers an approach to the "Hebraic" that

⁶³Ibid., 234.

⁶⁴Ibid., 190.

⁶⁵C. G. Montefiore, "One God: One Worship. A Sermon Preached at the West London Synagogue on Saturday, February 1, 1896," The Jewish Chronicle, 14 Feb 1896 quoted in Eugene C. Black, The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920 (London: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 23.

on one hand is "conservative," but conservative of a Jewishness that is shaped by the aesthetic qualities that are complementary to "English" life, or by "English" tastes. This process is intended to increase the attractiveness of Jewish worship and encourage Jews to maintain their ties to the synagogue rather than to feel stigmatized by an "oriental" religion.

Montefiore's work illustrates how the pressure for emancipated Jews to "Hellenize" seems to increase as the nineteenth century progresses. During this period, Jews gain continued access to political power so that prejudice towards the community can no longer be vented by denying them civil rights. The hostility towards the "Semite" that characterizes Gladstone's work seems to suggest that an outlet for latent prejudices may be found in discussions of the classics. Geoffrey Alderman stresses that Gladstone's eventual support of Jewish emancipation had more to do with the political expediency of doing so rather than with his attitude towards or understanding of Jews.⁶⁶ By the middle of the century Jewish voters put intense pressure on the Liberal party to pass the emancipation bill so that the issue could no longer be avoided. Gladstone's The Study of Homer appears in 1858 which is the same year that Rothschild took political office as the first professing Jew in Parliament. The publication of

⁶⁶Geoffrey Alderman, The Jewish Community in British Politics (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 36.

"Address on the Place of Greece" in 1865 coincided with the emergence of the political rivalry between Disraeli and Gladstone.⁶⁷ Juventus Mundi appeared three years later, just as Disraeli turned over his position as Prime Minister to Gladstone. This outline of Gladstone's scholarly career suggests that, while it was no longer feasible to attack Jewish presence in government, it was still possible to distance Jews from Western religious and cultural history by displacing the Hebraic with the Hellenic and the Semite with the Aryan.

In this way, Arnold's Culture and Anarchy functions in a more complicated manner than simply as a vehicle for expressing anti-Semitic or philo-Semitic ideologies. His work suggests one model for refiguring the Jewish self in a post-emancipation society so that it is complementary to the most general views of "English" social and political relations. As the works of Jewish intellectuals such as Montefiore and Zangwill indicate, there was intense pressure on the community to anglicize, and to attend to latent prejudices. This process was never quite successful and often resulted in a great deal of personal anguish for nineteenth-century Jews. However, it does suggest that Culture and Anarchy, and as I

⁶⁷At this time, the Liberals were out of Parliament and Disraeli was head of the Exchequer, leader of the House, and head of conservative party. He introduced a radical reform bill that had previously hurt the Liberal cause; thus prompting Gladstone's hostility. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Disraeli, Benjamin," by Sherry McKenzie.

will show in the next chapter, Literature and Dogma, participate in the debates over the relationship between the Jews and England.

CHAPTER VIII

ARNOLD'S RELIGIOUS PROSE AND ISRAEL'S MISSION: POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Gladstone's "Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East" (1876) was one of many political pamphlets that denounced the British government's response to reports that the Turks had massacred large numbers of their Bulgarian subjects. Bulgarian Christians had long been oppressed by the Turkish government which instituted unfair taxes as well as imposed civil and religious disabilities.¹ When they attempted to revolt in 1876, the Turks sent troops to suppress them:

These were let loose on an almost totally unarmed Christian population, of which only the smallest fraction was implicated in the attempted insurrection. Some fifteen thousand Bulgarian men, women, and children were massacred....Over seventy villages, two hundred schools, ten monasteries were destroyed.²

Disraeli's ministry had followed the longstanding policy of supporting the Turks in an effort to minimize French and Russian colonial pretensions in the Near East, but as reports of the atrocities continued to appear in nineteenth-century

¹This description of the Bulgarian agitation is based on R. T. Shannon, Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876 (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1963).

²Ibid., 22.

newspapers, the government's pro-Turkish position could no longer be tolerated by the British public. This expression of public outrage, commonly referred to as the Bulgarian agitation, resulted in almost five hundred demonstrations within the first six weeks after reports of the massacres appeared in the British press.

The Bulgarian agitation illustrates not only the shortcomings of Disraeli's foreign policy, but also the interconnections between political and religious causes. As R. T. Shannon points out, the massacre of Bulgarians by Turks gained notoriety partly because it was an affront to "Victorian moral sensibilities" that Christians should be murdered by Moslems. It seemed inconceivable that Christianity, the religion linked to the progress of civilization, should be undermined by the religion of the Turks which was considered both barbaric and antithetical to progress.³ Gladstone's outspokenness on this issue won him the support of the Dissenters, and resulted in the demise of Disraeli's government since it was unable to recover from the attacks on its mishandling of foreign policy. Gladstone's success also illustrates the ability of religious groups to influence political agendas in Victorian England.

The opposition to Disraeli's pro-Turkish position involved not only criticism of his foreign policies but also an attack on his seeming lack of compassion for the Bulgarian

³Ibid., 32.

Christians. Critics speculated that his Jewishness prevented him from sympathizing with the Christians, a perspective encouraged by the pro-Turkish sentiments of the Anglo-Jews in general.⁴ Though they did speak out on behalf of the victims, they also drew attention to the persecution of Rumanian Jews by Orthodox Christians that markedly contrasted with the Turkish tolerance of their co-religionists. Members of the community had financial interests in Turkey which contributed to their reticence on this issue. Yet, it is Goldwin Smith's criticism of Disraeli's Jewish background that further reveals the interconnections between politics and religion by showing how biblical interpretation can inform political rhetoric.

Smith, whose animosity towards Disraeli was rooted in political scuffles of the 1850s, extended his attack on the Jewish background of the Prime Minister to the Anglo-Jewish community in general.⁵ In "England's Abandonment of the Protectorate" (1877), Smith is not only concerned with exposing Disraeli as a "political intriguer" but also in demonstrating how the political "tendencies" of Judaism are detrimental to Victorian society. He refers to the Bulgarian crisis as the most tangible evidence of this danger, since England narrowly avoided a war with Russia that would have served to protect not only Turkey, but Jewish investments in

⁴Ibid., 199.

⁵For a detailed discussion of Smith's anti-semitism see Colin Holmes, "Goldwin Smith (1823-1910): A 'Liberal' Anti-semite," Patterns of Prejudice 6.5 (1972): 25-30.

the East:

For the first time perhaps Europe has had the occasion to note the political position and tendencies of Judaism. In fact, had England been drawn into this conflict it would have been in some measure a Jewish war, a war waged with British blood to uphold the aspects of Jewish sympathy, or to avenge Jewish wrongs.⁶

He gathers further support for his assessment of Judaism's political "tendencies" by using the New Testament to show how Christianity is "a religion of humanity" that embodies "the essential principles of modern civilization."⁷

Smith uses passages from the Hebrew Bible to demonstrate how the exclusiveness of Judaism and the unpatriotic nature of Jews makes their "political position" a threat to England. Unlike his characterization of Christianity as the "religion of humanity," Judaism "regard[s] both national interest and the general interest as subordinate to [those of] a scattered race."⁸ European nations have acted in good faith by extending "religious liberty" in order to make Jews citizens.⁹ However, Smith argues that Jews "cannot really share the political life of a European nation," so that their return to Judea "would be a danger averted from Western

⁶Goldwin Smith, "England's Abandonment of the Protectorate of Turkey," The Contemporary Review 31 (February 1878): 617.

⁷Ibid., 615.

⁸Goldwin Smith, "Can Jews Be Patriots?" The Nineteenth Century 3 (May 1878), 877.

⁹Smith, "England's Abandonment," 617.

civilization."¹⁰ The religious adherence of the Jews is a sign that they are a political liability, since they have failed to become fully emancipated and patriotic citizens of Europe. Smith not only gleans these conclusions from the Bible but over a course of several articles appearing in The Nineteenth Century uses extensive references to show how his biblical interpretations have immediate political consequences.

Yet, his use of the Bible raises broader theological questions about the validity of biblical interpretations that occupy other Victorians such as Matthew Arnold. In Literature and Dogma (1873) and God and the Bible (1875), Arnold is interested in distinguishing "misreadings" from "right readings" of the Bible. He attempts to identify a process of reading that will achieve "a right understanding of the Bible" by using "culture" as a guide: "Only true culture can give us this interpretation; so that if conduct is, as it is, inextricably bound up with the Bible and the right interpretation of it, then the importance of culture becomes unspeakable."¹¹ "Culture" functions in a mediating role that should help produce a "right reading" when it is utilized by those with "discriminate taste." Arnold's theory of biblical interpretation offers a way to discriminate between "right

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Matthew Arnold, Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1960-77), vol. 6, Dogma and Dissent, 162.

readings" and "misreadings" of the bible that have been applied to the Jewish questions and then, extrapolated into social and political commentary concerning the relationship of Anglo-Jews to England.

In this chapter, I will show that Arnold's narrative of biblical history and his assessment of popular Christianity are used by Jewish writers to defend Judaism from its critics as well as to argue for its continued importance in nineteenth-century society. The Anglo-Jews were well aware of the theological controversies that pre-occupied Victorian Christians, since many of them indirectly affected the Jewish community. Jewish members of Parliament confronted the political struggles that resulted from the schism between Dissenters and the Church of England, but they discreetly refrained from voting on disestablishment. The Jewish Chronicle reported on the agitation of Dissenters, describing it as evidence of a growing crisis in Christianity. It also brought theological debates over the Hebrew Bible to the attention of its readers both because they influenced the valuation of Mosaic Law, and because they often had political or social ramifications for the public assessment of Judaism. Consequently, the notoriety of Arnold's Literature and Dogma and God and the Bible in the Christian community also made them a topic of discussion, although to a lesser degree, in

The Jewish Chronicle and among Jewish intellectuals.¹² Jewish readers tended to respond favorably to several aspects of his works, including his valuation of the Hebrew Bible, his refusal to dismiss the ancient Hebrew religion as "tribal," and even his accounts of "Aryan metaphysics."

The significance of Arnold's argument for the moral authority of the Hebrew Bible can be better understood by contextualizing it within debates over the binding nature of Mosaic Law on nineteenth-century Christians. The Scotch Sabbath question of the 1860s exemplifies one such debate which gained attention from both Jews and Christians. In 1865, Norman MacLeod, a Scottish minister, voiced his opinion that "the authority of the Jewish Sabbath was insufficient as a basis on which to rest the observance of the Lord's day which he considered an essentially different institution."¹³ The Jewish Chronicle argued that in order for MacLeod to make such a claim, he "had to deny the binding nature of the Ten Commandments, and...of the whole Law of Moses so far as Christendom is concerned."¹⁴ Those church leaders who sided

¹²Jewish intellectuals who discussed Arnold's work tended to be interested in his accounts of the Hebrew Bible and Jewish history, so they focussed on Literature and Dogma and God and the Bible. His other religious prose works, except for his translation of Isaiah reviewed by The Jewish Chronicle, dealt almost entirely with issues that were specifically Christian and recieved little attention from Anglo-Jews.

¹³DNB, s.v. "MacLeod, Norman."

¹⁴"The Sabbath of the Jews," The Jewish Chronicle, 2 February 1866, p. 4.

with MacLeod were described as questioning Christ's role in religious history, since as a Jew he recognized the authority of the Decalogue: "The legitimate inference from this proposition is that it was the special mission of the founder of Christianity [was] not, as he taught, to fulfil the law, but..to abolish it."¹⁵ The Jewish Chronicle considers the Scotch Sabbath controversy as an indication of the contradictions existing between the Gospels and the Acts of the apostles, but the paper also equates it with lingering medieval prejudices against Jews. The resolution of this controversy has serious implications for English Protestantism because it must either follow "Rome's example by [putting] the Church higher than the Bible," or "it must return to the Jewish view of the Law."¹⁶

Recognition of the binding nature of the Law is also linked to the stability of English society, and the Jewish community. The abandonment of the Decalogue by Christians will require its removal from the prayerbook and catechism, but its most profound effect will be on the moral life of the "simple-minded class":

the Sunday teacher, when he instructs his simple-minded class, frequently drawn from the most uneducated portion of the population, must no longer hold forth the heinousness of the crime of murder as against the Ten Commandments binding upon every Christian, but must place this prohibition on quite different ground. But what if

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶"Troubles in the Churches," The Jewish Chronicle, 19 October 1866, p. 5.

the flock or class should be mentally incapable of following the guide on this new ground?¹⁷

This account indicates that the Scotch Sabbath controversy is working to undermine the social control of the lower classes, maintained by Protestant ministers teaching the Decalogue. Similarly, the political stability of the Anglo-Jewish community is jeopardized because the Protestant tradition, notably the Church of England, is associated with tolerance towards Jews by allowing their readmittance to England in the seventeenth century. Though they frequently disagree with their interpretations, Anglo-Jewish writers place a great deal of importance on a positive assessment of the Hebrew Bible by Protestant Christians such as Arnold.

Arnold's assessment of the Hebrew Bible in Literature and Dogma provides further support for The Jewish Chronicle's argument that the Decalogue has a crucial role in the development of morality. Wendell Harris argues that Arnold's references to Hebraism during the debates over marriage to a deceased wife's sister "would have been understood by careful readers not only to refer to the argument that the commandments given to the Jews were not necessarily applicable to Christians but also cast a shadow on Leviticus 18 and Deuteronomy 35."¹⁸ However, Arnold's doubts about the

¹⁷"The Sabbath of the Jews," 4.

¹⁸Wendell V. Harris, "Interpretive Historicism: 'Signs of the Time' and Culture and Anarchy in Their Contexts," Nineteenth-Century Literature 44 (1990), 459-60.

applicability of these texts to Victorian Christians do not prevent him from attributing to the Hebrew Bible a profound role in the spiritual life of those "lovers of religion." In Literature and Dogma, Arnold explains that the Hebrew Bible focusses on a concern for "righteousness" as the preeminent way for mastering "conduct." This accounts for the primacy of religion over the arts and sciences, since "the object of religion is conduct," which is "three-fourths of human life."¹⁹ The Hebrew Bible demonstrates how religion can control conduct by its emphasis on "righteousness" and in this way, contributes to the well-being of the individual: "Righteousness, order, conduct, is for Israel at once the source of all man's happiness, and at the same time the very essence of the Eternal."²⁰ The Hebrew Bible becomes indispensable since "the master-word of the Old Testament" is "righteousness." The "love of order, of righteousness" also has social and political implications for England, because it seems to offer another antidote to the anarchy of "doing as one likes" by fostering stability.

For Arnold, the example of righteousness found in the Hebrew Bible constitutes a distinctive place for Israel in both the history and future of religion. Israel has earned this recognition by acting as "witness" to the power of righteousness, and the Eternal, "a consciousness of the not

¹⁹Arnold, Complete Prose Works, 6:172.

²⁰Ibid., 6: 185.

ourselves which makes for righteousness," as well as by providing "evidence" that "in one branch of our race" there exists "the sense for conduct and righteousness, the reality and naturalness of that sense."²¹ Thus, Arnold assigns Israel both a historical and future role in the "progress" of righteousness, and religious thought:

This does truly constitute for Israel a most extraordinary distinction. In spite of all which in them...is unattractive, nay, repellent...this petty, unsuccessful, unamiable people...deserve their great place in the world's regard, and likely are to have it more, as the world goes on, rather than less.²²

While Arnold argues that Israel has earned "the world's regard" for its preservation of "righteousness," he also assumes here that it has little else to offer society but this distinctive talent, so that devaluing the Hebrew Bible denies the Jewish contribution to Western civilization. Furthermore, Arnold's comments about the "repellent" and "unattractive" qualities of the ancient Hebrews resonates with the anti-Jewish discourse used to malign Victorian Jews, as in the case of Culture and Anarchy.

Although Arnold may define Israel's "extraordinary distinction" somewhat narrowly, he advocates the study of the Hebrew Bible for Victorians who desire to make "progress" in their understanding of righteousness:

Every one is aware how those, who want to cultivate any sense or endowment in themselves, must be habitually

²¹Ibid., 6: 198.

²²Ibid., 6: 199.

conversant with the works of people who have been eminent for that sense, must study them, catch inspiration from them. Only in this way, can progress be made. And as long as the world lasts, all who want to make progress in righteousness will come to Israel for inspiration...and in hearing and reading the words Israel has uttered for us, carers for conduct will find...a force they could find nowhere else.²³

He indicates that intimate knowledge of the language of this text is necessary to "catch inspiration" from Israel, since it or more specifically, "Israel's name for God" seems to have contributed to the development of "religious consciousness."²⁴ Consequently, salvation is not limited to the New Testament but is also found in the Hebrew Bible for "the subject of the Old Testament, salvation by righteousness."²⁵ Those Christians who seek to replace the Hebrew Bible with the New Testament as an equivalent, or better system of morality will be at a loss for this sense of "righteousness" which is developed in "using their language...[so that] somewhat of their feeling, too, may not grow upon us."²⁶

While Arnold's positive valuation of the Hebrew Bible attracted certain Jewish readers to his work, his defence of the ancient Hebrew religion from accusations of "tribalism" also seemed to merit their approval. He denies the

²³Ibid., 6: 198-9.

²⁴Ibid., 6: 196.

²⁵Ibid., 6: 144.

²⁶Ibid., 6: 200.

"primitiveness" of the Bible partly to defend his own theories about the Hebrew conception of God: "It is objected that the Jews' God was not the enduring power that makes for righteousness, but only their tribal God."²⁷ In Literature and Dogma, Arnold brushes aside this objection by citing biblical passages that emphasize integrity and righteousness, and by arguing that such criticisms "will fall away" with greater experience of "the history of the human spirit." Arnold's concern over this issue of "tribalism" indicates the seriousness of this objection because it implies that the Hebrew Bible describes a moral system belonging to a select group rather than universal values that apply to all. Characterizing the Bible as "tribal" limits the significance that Christians should assign to it while also focussing on issues of Jewish exclusivity. Jews are placed on the margins of society because their sense of "morality" is not "universally" applicable but only appropriate to their tribe.

In fact, Arnold was forced to return to this issue once again in God and the Bible in order to further clarify Israel's role in religious history. He stresses the pivotal importance of Israel's religion by contrasting it with that of the ancient Greeks because "soberness and righteousness" were also "main elements of the early Greek religion."²⁸ However,

²⁷Ibid., 6: 196.

²⁸Matthew Arnold, Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1960-77), vol. 7, God and the Bible, 208.

Hellenic interest in "conduct and righteousness, did not last" so the "national religion was lost," and remained only to inspire Greek poetry.²⁹ Arnold concludes that the fundamental difference between the Greek and Hebraic sense of righteousness was this ability to inspire a "national religion":

Because the nation adopted them. So powerfully did the inmost chords of its being vibrate to them...that it adopted them, made its standards, the documents of that most profound and authentic expression of the nation's consciousness, its religion.³⁰

In fact, Israel "far more than any other race known to us" was "absorbed by the idea of righteousness" because "he has the intuition, the revelation."³¹ This unique "intuition" which only Israel exhibits forms the basis of Arnold's argument against those who reduce the Hebrew religion to a series of primitive ceremonial practices, or to a tribal religion. Arnold concludes that it is unnecessary to provide a more detailed "scientific account" of Israel's religious development, since it is characterized by intuition. Although not consistently "scientific," his analysis portrays the Hebrew religion as embodying an "universal morality" preserved by a particular people for all of humankind, rather than as an "exclusive" religion of particular race.

Arnold's defense of the Hebrew Bible also makes his works

²⁹Ibid., 7: 209.

³⁰Ibid., 7: 214.

³¹Ibid., 7: 215.

participants in the social and political debates over Judaism that emerge along with attacks on Disraeli's Jewishness during the Bulgarian agitation. Once Judaism is labeled a "tribal religion," it is designated as both "spiritually" incompatible with Christianity and as a political danger since racial loyalty forms the basis of its beliefs. In "Can Jews be Patriots?" (1878), Smith points to numerous practices among Jews that he sees as indicative of the tribal nature of their religion. He argues that the refusal of Jews to intermarry is not only evidence of "tribalism," because it is "recoiling from fusion with the nation," but also demonstrates their inability to be patriotic citizens.³² Judaism is even portrayed as incompatible with the extension of civil liberties:

The nations of Europe, taking Judaism to be like any other form of religious belief, have acted on the supposition that by extending to it the principles of religious liberty they could make a Jew a citizen....This was a misconception....Judaism, like the whole circle of primitive religions...is a religion of race, the exclusiveness of race being closely identified with religion....³³

Jews can be made "voters" but their "tribal religion" will keep them from being "patriots," making them a danger to the nation. Smith's identification of Judaism with "tribalism" illustrates how theological issues have political and ideological implications with the potential to influence the

³²Smith, "Can Jews Be Patriots?" 879.

³³Smith, "England's Abandonment," 617.

material existence of the Jewish community.

Although Smith does not specifically refer to Arnold, he blames Hebrew Bible enthusiasts for the persistence of Jewish distinctiveness in England. Jews, whose "exercise of political power" must be watched, are encouraged to adhere to their religion because of reverence for the Bible:

No doubt Christianity is in some measure to blame for the obstinate adherence of the Jews to their tribal religion and their exclusiveness of race. The Christian Churches continue to make an irrational use of the Old Testament...and to set before the people as examples of morality acts...which have ceased to be moral.³⁴

Moreover, Smith sees the abandonment of the "Old Testament" by Victorians as having little consequence, since "spiritual life" of the ancient Hebrews has been passed on to Christianity, and all that is left in Judaism is "tribalism, becoming every day more obsolete."³⁵ Neither the Hebrew Bible nor Judaism has anything of value to offer "the universal brotherhood of man," so that the disappearance of the Jews by "the fusion of the more liberal element with European society," would have little effect on religious progress.³⁶ In light of Smith's comments, Arnold's insistence on the enduring message of the Hebrew Bible as unique, but universal, seems to encourage Jewish distinctiveness.

³⁴Smith, "Can Jews Be Patriots?" 886.

³⁵Ibid., 879.

³⁶Ibid., 885.

Over the course of several articles appearing in The Nineteenth Century, Rabbi Hermann Adler refutes Smith's claims about the "primitive" and "exclusive" nature of Judaism. He does so by arguing that the Bible's "sublime religious and moral principles" are "applicable to the whole of mankind, and have beyond a doubt become, by their having formed the foundations of Christianity and Islam, the great dynamic agents in modern civilization."³⁷ In this way, Adler also ties his argument for Judaism to the well-being of English society. He stresses that not only Jews but the vast majority of Christians continue to value the "Old Testament," and he exemplifies this point by referring to "a non-Israelite writer, and one of no mean authority":

Mr. Matthew Arnold in his Literature and Dogma, rightly insists that conduct or righteousness...is in a special manner the object of Bible religion....What would England have been were it not for the importance which Jeshurun, the upright, attached to the thought and practice of righteousness? She might have been eminent in law, in arts...but, like Rome and Greece, she would have been addicted to idolatry and the gratification of the senses....Mr. Arnold draws a vivid imaginary picture of the authorities of one of our great universities...going in procession to worship at the shrine of Aphrodite.³⁸

Adler's reference to Literature and Dogma illustrates how Arnold's assessment of the enduring significance of righteousness as revealed in the Hebrew Bible is also intertwined with debates about the survival of Jewish

³⁷Hermann Adler, "Jews and Judaism: A Rejoinder," The Nineteenth Century 4 (July 1878): 140.

³⁸Ibid., 141.

distinctiveness and Judaism's spiritual mission in nineteenth-century society. Anglo-Jews are faced with an unresolved paradox: in order to maintain the political stability of their community so that they may practice their religion and preserve their distinctiveness, they must continually demonstrate how the Hebrew Bible is "universal" and compatible with Christianity.

Not all Jewish commentators are as reticent as Adler about the political implications of Smith's claims or the social deployment of biblical interpretation. In "A Jewish View of the Anti-Jewish Agitation" (1881), Lucien Wolf demonstrates "modern Christianity" authorizes theological interpretations that foster religious and racial prejudice, thus jeopardizing the Jew's ability to function as a patriotic citizen of England. He describes "the wave of anti-Jewish agitation...now sweeping across the entire world" as a "contagion" that has made its way to England.³⁹ The Liberals who include Smith display symptoms of this "contagion" by "[venting] all their party spleen on the Jewish race."⁴⁰ However, Wolf does not see this "contagion" as a form of racism but argues that "Anti-Semitism is after all as bitter a theological agitation as the Jew-hating of the Middle Ages,

³⁹Lucien Wolf, "A Jewish View of the Anti-Jewish Agitation," The Nineteenth Century 9 (February 1881): 338.

⁴⁰Ibid., 341.

and it is deeply tinged with the proselytising mania."⁴¹ It is spurred on by "the tendency of modern Christianity to foster, if not the hatred, at any rate the contempt and suspicion, with which the Jew is regarded...."⁴² The "noisy missions" for the conversion of Jews and the "explicit lessons of Christian prayer books" are vehicles for the spread of this contempt that teaches the "general public...to believe that Jews stand upon an inferior moral level to themselves."⁴³ Arnold's Literature and Dogma acts as a partial corrective to this public perception of the moral inferiority of the Jews by recognizing the significance of the Hebrew Bible from which they draw their religious precepts. Yet, he also undermines the social implications of his work by denying Judaism its place in religious progress, and its ability to further righteousness.

Furthermore, Arnold's defense of the moral teachings of the Hebrew Bible and Israel's ancient religion is not synonymous with an endorsement of nineteenth-century Judaism. Christianity is described here as the religion of the future, "[having] brought the world, or at any rate the leading part of the world, to regard righteousness as only the Jews regarded it before the coming of Christ."⁴⁴ Human progress

⁴¹Ibid., 347.

⁴²Ibid., 356.

⁴³Ibid., 357.

⁴⁴Arnold, Complete Prose Works, 6: 398.

is also ensured by the work of the missionary, who hampered by the "inadequacy of his criticism," nonetheless civilizes nations through preaching his or her beliefs: "Yet every one allows that this strange figure carries something of what is called European civilization with him and a good part of this is due to Christianity."⁴⁵ While Jews and Christians "taunt" each other with the failure of their respective religions to fulfill the prophecies, "the Christianization of the leading nations of the world is, it is said, a much better fulfillment of that promise."⁴⁶ In fact, Zangwill's argument that Judaism is frequently "devitalized" by Christians is further substantiated by Arnold's claim that "of the religion of the Old Testament we can pretty well see to the end, we can trace fully enough the experimental proof of it in history."⁴⁷

Except for his discussion of "aberglaube," Arnold's prose does little to challenge traditional Christological narratives about the flaws inherent in Judaism that necessitate the coming of Christ. He maintains that the Hebrew Bible is a product of "the golden age of Israel" during "which the sense of the necessary connection between righteousness and happiness appears in its full simplicity."⁴⁸ At about the time of the Book of Ecclesiastes, Israel was burdened "with

⁴⁵Ibid., 6: 382.

⁴⁶Ibid., 6: 397.

⁴⁷Ibid., 6: 396.

⁴⁸Ibid., 6: 205.

resources light and taxes heavy, with the cancer of poverty...with the rich estranged from the poor and from national traditions, with the priesthood slack...."⁴⁹ These social and economic problems contributed to the decline of religion so that it became a "mechanical and exterior performance" as well as encouraged Jewish hopes in national restoration with the coming of the Messiah. Consequently, Israel loses the "experimental" or "verifiable" basis for its religion by allowing the invasions of "metaphysical" beliefs in such things as "bodily resurrection." Christ was to renew "the old and lost prerogative of Israel" by establishing a "personal religion" that would restore "an idea of meekness, inwardness, patience, and self denial."⁵⁰ Christ's method of "inwardness" proved to be a "stronger motive" for inspiring the awe of the Eternal, thus reveals itself to be "the true line of religion."⁵¹ For his Victorian readers, "now Christianity is that which righteousness really is."⁵²

Arnold's narrative of religious history reveals his pre-occupations with demonstrating the need for religion to be both "verifiable" and "reasonable." His strategy of using the "experimental grounds" of Israel's religion to demonstrate that it is "verifiable" causes him once again to defend the

⁴⁹Ibid., 6: 207.

⁵⁰Ibid., 6: 225.

⁵¹Ibid., 6: 291.

⁵²Ibid., 6: 397.

Hebrew Bible's message of righteousness. In this instance, Christ's message of "sweet reasonableness" seems to complement rather than simply displace Israel's message of righteousness, so that Literature and Dogma simultaneously argues for the "verifiability " of both the New and Old Testaments.⁵³ Arnold is intent on responding to criticisms of religion that discredit it because it is not "scientific" as well as to the schisms in the Church of England prompted by dogmatic theology. Literature and Dogma attempts to provide the "lovers of religion" with an account of its history that is both "verifiable" and "scientific," and to offer a new stronger "foundation" for Christianity in a time of theological controversy.

At the same time, Jewish writers continually draw on elements of Arnold's work to further validate the relevance of their religion to Victorian society. It is this criticism of nineteenth-century theology and its perpetuation of "unreasonable" beliefs that situate Arnold's work in the midst of debates over the relative merits of Christianity and Judaism carried on in The Jewish Chronicle. Arnold's criticism of nineteenth-century theologians centers on their use of "metaphysics" because it erodes the "experimental" basis of Christianity and also encourages the "lapsed masses" to question its authority and verifiableness. This "turn" for "abstract thought" characterizes the "Aryan genius" of

⁵³Ibid., 7: 230.

Christian theologians while leading them to speculate on miracles, theories of the Godhead's personality, and bodily resurrection. Arnold describes such theologians as "men with more metaphysics than literary tact, full of Aryan genius, of the notion that religion is a metaphysical conception."⁵⁴ Furthermore, this Aryan use of "metaphysics" functions to undermine the Semitic basis of Christianity, leading to Arnold's repeated attacks on Émile Burnouf's theories. Arnold expresses little pleasure over the possibility that Christianity has "Aryan origins" because such theories frequently involve the importation of "metaphysics" into religion:

that the oracles of God were not committed to a Semitic race at all, but to the Aryan; that the true God is not Israel's God at all, but is 'the idea of the absolute'....This 'sacred theory of Aryas'...passed in to Palestine from Persia...so that we Christians, who are Aryas, may have the satisfaction of thinking that 'the religion of Christ has not come to us from the Semites'....⁵⁵

This corruption of religion with "metaphysics" clouds the issues of "righteousness" and "inwardness" that should be the focal points of religious faith. The "condition of England" with its growing religious skepticism and emphasis on material gain seems to parallel Israel's decay because of the invasion of "aberglaube" and various social problems.

According to Arnold, this displacement of the Semitic

⁵⁴Ibid., 6: 266.

⁵⁵Ibid., 6: 239.

origins of Christianity cannot be separated from an attack on the Bible itself. While the Bishops of Winchester and Gloucester may be pleased with such speculation, Christianity is further imperiled:

But to Bible religion...it is not flattering; for it throws overboard almost entirely the Old Testament, and makes the essence of the New to consist in an esoteric doctrine....The metaphysical element is made the fundamental element.⁵⁶

Arnold responds harshly to this abandonment of the "Old Testament" by noting that Israel has a strong sense of "moral experience":

we are not with this treatment of Israel and the Bible. And admitting that Israel shows no talent for metaphysics, we say that his religious greatness is just this, that he does not found religion on metaphysics, but on moral experience....⁵⁷

The "metaphysical theories" of the Aryans alter the perception that religious faith should be grounded on "moral experience" so that "we see every day that the making religion into metaphysics is the weakening of religion," because it "lacks power for laying hold on people."⁵⁸ The Hebrew Bible's place in the future of religious development is tied to its accounts of "moral experience" which seem to be partial antidote for the spread of religious skepticism.

In addition, Arnold's criticism of nineteenth-century theologians leads him to construct an account of "Jewish

⁵⁶Ibid., 6: 25.

⁵⁷Ibid., 6: 241.

⁵⁸Ibid.

unbelief." Rather than identify "Jewish unbelief" as an innate flaw, or characteristic faithlessness of the Jews, Arnold attributes it to the contradictions in the biblical texts themselves and the exegetical practices of Christians. Both contribute to the impression that Christianity has no "verifiable" basis and is "unreasonable." He argues that "Jesus Christ was undoubtedly the very last sort of Messiah that the Jews expected."⁵⁹ The "popular Jewish mind" had a very different vision of the Messiah, and it also failed to perceive the need for religious "renewal," both contributing to the lack of recognition. In fact, "the characteristics of humility, obscureness, and depression [that] were commonly attributed to the Jewish Messiah" by Christian theologians were recognized by the Jews as "belong[ing] to God's chastened servant the idealized Israel."⁶⁰

The exegetical practices of Christian theologians have done little to make the conception of the Messiah seem more "reasonable" to the Jews. Arnold observes that it was "a somewhat violent exegetical proceeding" to combine in the description of the Messiah such disparate characteristics as "Daniel's son of man coming with the clouds of heaven," "the Second Isaiah's meek and afflicted Servant of God," and "the sacrificial lamb of the passover and of the temple

⁵⁹Ibid., 6: 214.

⁶⁰Ibid.

service."⁶¹ These "exegetical proceedings" demonstrate to Arnold that "to find in Jesus the genuine Jewish Messiah...must certainly, to a Jew, have been extremely difficult."⁶² Christian theology has attempted to minimize the contradictions in the description of the Messiah so as to impress upon the believer its "naturalness":

To us, who have been formed and fashioned by a theology whose set purpose is to efface all the difficulties in such a combination, and to make it received, easily and unhesitatingly, it may appear natural. In itself and the elements of which it is composed viewed singly and impartially, it cannot but be pronounced violent.⁶³

Moreover, Arnold concludes that "Jewish unbelief" illustrates "the want of power to penetrate through wraps...which the majority of mankind always displays."⁶⁴ His discussion here not only undermines the narrow Medieval conception of the Jews as "faithless" but also points to the constant need of theologians to "efface" contradictions found in accounts of the Messiah. Jews act as the representatives of "reason" in this instance who only fail to see what many nineteenth-century Christians also question, the "naturalness," or the "verifiableness" of Christianity.

The Jewish Chronicle makes use of Arnold's argument about the corrupting influence of "Aryan metaphysics" to draw

⁶¹Ibid., 6: 222.

⁶²Ibid., 6: 214.

⁶³Ibid., 6: 222.

⁶⁴Ibid., 6: 225.

attention to Jewish contributions to English society, and to emphasize the need for the study of Jewish history in order to ensure the proper interpretation of Semitic texts. In a series of articles entitled "The Influence of Judaism on Modern Civilization" (1873), the paper parallels Arnold with Disraeli as a noteworthy figure who acknowledges Jewish contributions to European civilization:

Mr. DISRAELI did the world an essential service when he drew attention to the fact that to a Semitic race was due nearly every conception which has given tone and vitality to European civilization; and Mr. MATTHEW ARNOLD follows in the same wake, though in a different fashion, when he declares that Semitic conceptions, which underlie all Christian dogma, only admit of Semitic interpretations, and that they become distorted when we seek to understand them by 'Aryan metaphysics.'⁶⁵

While this passage alludes to the discussion of Émile Burnouf's work in Literature and Dogma, it goes beyond Arnold's argument that "Aryan metaphysics" are mistakenly applied to Semitic texts by suggesting that these texts "only admit of Semitic interpretations."⁶⁶ Western civilization as well as Christianity need to recognize these misinterpretations in order to better apprehend the "principles" on which progress depends:

And as 'Aryan metaphysics" cannot even interpret the principles on which modern civilization expands, the part played by Hellenic culture in giving tone to modern thought...is infinitely small compared with Judaic influences, and the popular estimate is greatly

⁶⁵"The Influence of Judaism on Modern Civilization," The Jewish Chronicle, 23 May 1873, p. 132.

⁶⁶Ibid.

overrated.⁶⁷

In this instance, Arnold's religious prose is used by The Jewish Chronicle to downplay the role of Hellenism in the development of "modern thought," even though his early work had advocated Hellenizing. The Aryan is kept from usurping the Semite by linking "Judaic influences" to the "expansion" or progress of civilization rather than being antithetical to it as Smith argues.

The Jewish Chronicle also argues that the stability of Britain's legal system rests on implementing the proper "Semitic interpretations" of the Law. This argument is based on the assumption that "Christianity in its varied forms gives laws to the civilized world, and these laws can only be understood by the light Judaic literature and jurisprudence can throw on them," since they are products with a Semitic origin.⁶⁸ It follows that "the development of humanity towards mundane perfectibility depends entirely upon the revealed law of Israel," because Mosaic Laws have so intimately influenced the development of "modern jurisprudence" in England. "Aryan metaphysics" pose a threat to the legal system by causing "deviations" from the principles of Jewish law which underwrite it. The Jewish Chronicle observes that "the English legislature is only but slowly advancing towards...complete recognition of the

⁶⁷Ibid., 133.

⁶⁸Ibid., 132.

salutary precepts contained in Levitical Law" that have influenced such laws as the Mines Regulation Bill.⁶⁹ In addition, the abandonment of "Aryan metaphysics" will result in the British recognition of how Judaism has influenced civilization "by giving tone to society, and colour to legislative enactments; how far it has directed social reforms and permeated the spirit of modern legislation--especially the criminal code of England."⁷⁰ Arnold's work provides further evidence for Jewish writers in their efforts to show how the Semite has influenced Western culture, and to argue for the importance of the Jew to its continued progress.

Arnold's Literature and Dogma also participates in the debates over the "reasonableness" of Judaism as opposed to Christianity that began even before its publication. The practice of identifying Judaism with "reasonableness" generally has two functions: it is frequently used as a rebuttal to conversionist societies, and it highlights the strength and future importance of Judaism. Endelman points out that while conversionist societies were often very militant in their efforts to proselytize, they actually made few converts. Yet, their very existence was perceived as a continued threat to the community. The controversies confronting Christianity provided a way to discredit their

⁶⁹Ibid., 133.

⁷⁰"The Influence of Judaism on Modern Civilization," The Jewish Chronicle, 28 March 1873, 769.

efforts in the Jewish press:

Who is the founder of modern Christianity? Is it Jesus or Paul?...Is it Jerome or Socinus, Pius IX or Renan?--Matthew Arnold...Dr. Pusey or Dr. Temple?...Really one grows bewildered...one hears of the success of the efforts to convert the Jews to Christianity, one cannot avoid a smile--a smile of wonder as to what sort of Christianity they are to embrace? The Christianity that believes in Jesus, or the Christianity that does nothing of the sort.⁷¹

Arnold along with several other nineteenth-century figures is depicted as attempting to offer a new "sort of Christianity." This suggests that his early work, probably St. Paul and Protestantism, was known to some degree by the Jewish community, but that it is simply one approach among many to the problems confronting Christianity. These comments also highlight The Jewish Chronicle's perception of Christianity's disarray, and raises questions about the future of religion in England.

In fact, The Jewish Chronicle repeatedly draws attention to the "unreasonableness" of Christianity in order to differentiate it from Judaism, and to explore the future of a "Jewish mission" in England.⁷² As early as the 1860s, the paper links the "unreasonableness" of Christianity with the need for a new awareness of Judaism's spiritual insights. Just as Arnold will later do in Literature and Dogma, the paper sees the emergence of independent scientific thought as

⁷¹"Judaism and Christianity," The Jewish Chronicle, 29 October 1869, p. 7.

⁷²"Our Mission," The Jewish Chronicle, 21 April 1876, p. 41.

the source of religious turmoil. "Science" has become "itself independent of theology" and the limitations it imposed on free inquiry:

The contents of theology, like those of every traditional system, were weighed and found wanting. It was not only found that the historical basis which theology had founded Christianity was wholly untenable, but that the ethics and morality and dogmas it taught were incompatible with the general order of morality and laws of thought....⁷³

Science has encouraged the "unsettled" state of "the Christian religious mind" forcing it to "seek new channels" of ideas. In another account, those observing "the agitation in the Church" notice that "the shadow before our eyes reaches far, and is truly dark."⁷⁴ The next "reformation" must consider the reconciliation of science with Christian theology: "The question is, how can the elements in Christianity antagonistic to reason and morality be eliminated without involving Christianity itself in their destruction?"⁷⁵

The answer to this question almost always hinges on the need for Christians to develop a new awareness of what Judaism has to offer. After having been confused by the inconsistencies of the Gospels, the Christian "will re-examine the original source of all revelation," and "will see that

⁷³"Continued Agitation in the Church," The Jewish Chronicle, 21 June 1867, p. 4.

⁷⁴"The Reformation That Is To Come," The Jewish Chronicle, 20 September 1867, p. 4.

⁷⁵Ibid.

Israel's law is all-sufficient."⁷⁶ Judaism with its account of Sinaitic revelation will best serve this purpose because it is not "antagonistic to the general laws of thought."⁷⁷ In other words, the Jewish faith is compatible with reason. Christianity faces a crisis because it raised "miracles" to "dogma," or to "creeds" such as the Trinity or the resurrection. Judaism is free of these errors so that the "supernatural element could be eliminated" from the Hebrew Bible "without in any way affecting the revelation on Sinai."⁷⁸ Sounding much like Arnold, The Jewish Chronicle argues for a new "foundation" for religious belief:

This agitation in the Churches cannot and will not cease until they have found the foundation upon which they may safely rest. This the revelation on Sinai only offers them.⁷⁹

Judaism is defined as the religion of "reason," able to weather the attacks of the Higher Criticism as well as free scientific inquiry by its ability to stand without reliance on the "supernatural." In the 1860s and 1870s, Judaism, because of its compatibility with science, is clearly thought by members of the Jewish community to be the religion of the future: "Judaism is an ark of safety amid the rising waters

⁷⁶"Continued Agitation in the Church," 5.

⁷⁷"Continued Agitation in the Church," The Jewish Chronicle, 28 June 1867, p. 4.

⁷⁸Ibid., 5.

⁷⁹"Continued Agitation in the Church," 5.

of doubt, the stormy waves of religious polemics."⁸⁰

The epitome of this debate over the futures of Judaism and Christianity seems to be reached in the 1890s when Oswald John Simon poses the need for a Jewish mission in The Fortnightly Review. He asks the question: "What shall take the place of those creeds which are losing hold upon the minds of the many educated Englishmen and English women?"⁸¹ Simon alludes to the development of a "religious brotherhood" like that described in Robert Elsmere by Mrs. Humphry Ward, but feels dissatisfied with it as a replacement for Christianity. However, he suggests that "Judaism is ready to fill up the great gap in the religious thought of the modern world."⁸² He proposes forming a "Church of Israel" for non-Jews in order to provide a "translation of Judaism" that "would render it immediately intelligible to ordinary Englishmen."⁸³ This "translation" would espouse the essential teachings of Judaism without the "Orientalism" associated with a regular synagogue service. It is Judaism's ability to "assimilate to itself the results of scientific inquiry" as well as the strength of its spiritual and ethical teachings that will allow it to fill the

⁸⁰"The Spirit of the Age," The Jewish Chronicle, 13 June 1873, p. 181.

⁸¹Oswald John Simon, "The Mission of Judaism," The Fortnightly Review, o.s., 66 (October 1896), 583.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid., 586.

"gap" in nineteenth-century religious thought.⁸⁴

The Jewish Quarterly Review published a selection of Anglo-Jewish responses to Simon's proposal indicating that though never carried out, it recieved moderate attention from the Jewish community's intellectuals and leaders. Positive and negative responses are intermingled in the article which provides a sense of the range of perspectives held by various Jews. Israel Abrahams chides Simon for neglecting the "toiling masses" in favor of the "cultured 'liberals'" because "the mission of Judaism with its strong doctrines of duty and righteousness" might have "a saving effect" on them.⁸⁵ Albert Goldsmid observes "an intellectual revolt against doctrinal Christianity has arisen" leaving many "struggling for the light now seen by them 'as through a glass darkly.'" ⁸⁶ Morris Joseph argues that "there are many religious inquirers...who would willingly throw in their lot with Jewish Theism if they had the chance" because "there is something that appeals to the imagination in the thought of being associated with an historic religion, with a people that claims to have a divine mission...."⁸⁷ H. S. Lewis sees that "doubtless it will become finally a universal religion

⁸⁴Ibid., 589.

⁸⁵Oswald John Simon, "The Mission of Judaism," The Jewish Quarterly Review 9 (1897), 197.

⁸⁶Ibid., 202.

⁸⁷Ibid., 206.

suitable to Jew and Gentile."⁸⁸

However, responses to Simon are not all so enthusiastic. Several express concern about this "mission" threatening the stability of Judaism, and increasing anti-Semitism. While Claude Montefiore notes "the condition of Judaism and of society is not unfavorable to these seeds and germs blossoming," he doubts that Christianity is so "bound up with old-fashioned dogma" as to be rendered obsolete.⁸⁹ Lucien Wolf, and Hermann Adler both emphasize the need to care for Jewish spiritual needs before ministering to Christians. Wolf fears such a movement would result in "diluted Judaism," while Zangwill suggests that any mission must be "on specifically Jewish lines or none at all." Adler believes that this kind of movement would be seen as an affront to the "dominant religion" and urges caution in order not to hasten the spread of anti-Semitism. This sentiment is echoed by S. Friedeberg who argues:

I seriously question whether the spirit of tolerance is sufficiently deep even in this land of liberty to permit Christians to regard with equanimity any organized attempt on our part to minister to the religious needs outside our own community.⁹⁰

In contrast, Zangwill looks inside the community, noting that "we [Jews] are in the very midst of a chaotic period of transition" and need time to sort out what it means to be

⁸⁸Ibid., 208.

⁸⁹Ibid., 198.

⁹⁰Ibid., 201.

Jewish in a post-emancipation society.⁹¹

The sense of a Jewish mission in society is informed by many of the same issues that prompt Arnold's writing of Literature and Dogma and God and the Bible. It is a result of the general concern over the spiritual state of England, and what is perceived by both Christians and Jews as a revolution in religious thought prompted by scientific investigation of theological issues. This feeling is intensified by the continued divisiveness among Christians over issues such as disestablishment. While the growth of anti-Semitism and pressures to assimilate confront Anglo-Jews, there is also the perception among the intellectual elite that Judaism has the potential to fill the "gap" in England's spiritual life. Consequently, the Jewish community's sense of "mission" and identity is inseparable from the religious controversies facing Christianity during the nineteenth century. These interconnections suggests that Arnold's emphasis on the "reasonableness" and "verifiability" of the Hebrew Bible indirectly functions to affirm many of the claims made by Jewish intellectuals about the continuing importance of Israel's mission in nineteenth-century society.

While the Jewish community has offered its own spiritual insights as an antidote to the religious uncertainties prompted by inconsistencies in the Gospels, Arnold provides an alternative reading of them in an attempt to save them from

⁹¹Ibid., 223.

abandonment by Victorian Christians. In God and the Bible, Arnold specifically concerns himself with the "fallaciousness of the criticism" applied to St. John's Gospel by placing a new "construction" on the text that takes into consideration "experience of human nature" and "the history of the human spirit" as a "guide" to its study.⁹² His response to the Tübingen School of biblical critics emphasizes Christ's Jewish origins and his relationship to his fellow Jews, so that Victorians are forced to acknowledge the Semitic origins of Christianity. This theological debate has import for nineteenth-century Jews because the relationship of Anglo-Jews to Western civilization is often thinly disguised as a debate over the relationship of Jesus to the ancient Jewish community. Furthermore, Arnold's concern for the preservation of St. John's Gospel forces him to confront its anti-Jewish polemic that, as Wolf argued, has helped foster the spread of anti-Semitism.

In God and the Bible, Arnold's immediate purpose is to refute Ferdinand Christian Baur's argument that the Fourth Gospel is an "anti-Jewish" polemic or propaganda. His attacks on Baur also indicate that there is an underlying struggle here between the Greek and Jewish Christians, and between the "transcendental theology" of the Aryan, and the "experimental proof" of the Hebrew. In fact, he specifically attacks Baur because of the dogmatic and transcendental nature of his

⁹²Arnold, Complete Prose Works, 7: 279.

interpretation of the Gospel:

Baur has proved, it is said, that the Fourth Gospel was composed...in the heat of a conflict between Jewish and anti-Jewish Christianity, and to help the anti-Jewish side. It has a direct dogmatic design....It develops the Logos-idea, and its Christ is a dogma personified...an antithesis found in both the physical and moral world, and in the moral world exemplifying by the contrast of Jewish unbelief with true faith.⁹³

Arnold sees Baur's work not only undermining the Gospel as a historical document, but also questioning the possibility that it actually contains Christ's words at all. Baur claims that the Gospel may be the invention of a "partisan and propagandist of a dogma of transcendental theology," or of "the artistic Greek Christian" who has "a deep-laid design to damage Jewish Christianity."⁹⁴ His theory makes the Gospel of questionable value to Christians seeking "sweet reasonableness" of Jesus, while also undermining Christianity's Semitic origins. Arnold considers such a claim untenable because "a free inventor...would never have made Jesus say: 'Salvation is of the Jews.'"⁹⁵

Arnold offers an alternative account of this "anti-Jewish" polemic that Baur finds in the Gospel by focussing on the problem of racial and cultural difference in the process of transmitting Christ's logion. He hypothesizes that the Gospel was produced by "the hand of a man of literary talent,

⁹³Ibid., 7: 283.

⁹⁴Ibid., 7: 322.

⁹⁵Ibid., 7: 323.

a Greek Christian" who "appeals" to St. John's authority for the logion of Christ.⁹⁶ This explains "the Greek philosophy and style" of the Gospel as well as the "mistakes" in ceremonial and other practices that "a foreigner might perfectly well have made, but hardly a Jew."⁹⁷ The difference in cultural backgrounds allows "our Greek editor" to represent such events as the crucifixion "otherwise than as the Synoptics...[because] his hold on Jewish details is less firm than theirs, and his use of Jewish details more capricious."⁹⁸ It is the ignorance of Jewish culture and religion that seems to leave the reader with the sense that the Greek writer is trying to convey an "anti-Jewish" polemic. The Victorian Bible reader must be aware of this dynamic and of literary criticism in order to distinguish between John's account of Christ's sayings and the embellishments of the Greek writer.

As Arnold makes his case for the "Greek editor" of the Fourth Gospel, he also repeatedly draws attention to the Jewish background of the apostles and Christ. "The plain reader" will notice "the extraordinary way in which the writer of the Fourth Gospel, whom we suppose a Jew, speaks of his brother Jews...as if they and their usages belonged to another

⁹⁶Ibid., 7: 290.

⁹⁷Ibid., 7: 287.

⁹⁸Ibid., 7: 355.

race from himself,--to another world."⁹⁹ Arnold adds that even if St. John "wrote in Greek...still he could never, surely have brought himself to speak of the Jews and of Jewish things in this fashion!"¹⁰⁰ St. John would not have avoided both the "inaccurate treatment of Palestinian geography" and that of "Jewish feelings and ideas." In addition, he would have closely identified himself with fellow Jews rather than have "spoken of them as strangers." These frequent references to the Jewishness of the apostles prevent the reader from dismissing the Semitic as incidental in comparison to "the Greek editor."

Although Christ's teachings will establish a new religion, they are also portrayed as being consonant with Jewish life and culture of the time. Arnold points out that Christ's concern was initially preaching to the Jewish people, so that Jesus's "maxims" may be considered as a way of speaking common to "the nation and race to which he belonged."¹⁰¹ While the Jews of his time did not understand his message, Jesus did not abandon Jewish teachings but rather "[he] contented himself with taking the conception of God as the Jews had it, and as the Old Testament delivered it, as the eternal and righteous father" but not as "Logos."¹⁰² Arnold

⁹⁹Ibid., 7: 286.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 7: 287.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 7: 340.

¹⁰²Ibid., 7: 348.

also concludes a complicated argument about the relationship between the dates of the Crucifixion and the Jewish Passover by arguing that Christ never intended to identify himself with the Paschal Lamb, implying that he did not usurp Jewish law.¹⁰³ Furthermore, he adamantly denies Baur's suggestion that Christ's death during Passover was a "design to prove the ending of all things Jewish," nor would St. John have any intention of identifying Christ with the Passover lamb.¹⁰⁴ Of course, this argument serves his larger purpose of disproving Baur and strengthening the authority of the Gospels, but it also implies that the development of early Christianity must be considered within a Jewish milieu, and that only an individual with a wide "experience of human nature," of both Gentiles and Jews, will be able to put a right "construction" on the biblical texts.

In "The Spirit of the Age" (1873), The Jewish Chronicle joins Arnold in his attack on the Higher Criticism of the Tübingen school. The paper seldom hesitates to characterize the Christian interpretation of the Hebrew Bible as erroneous, but it does not go so far as to deny all connections between Christianity and Judaism. It also occasionally points to the ignorance of Christians with regards to Jewish customs and religious texts, and their general neglect of the "genius of the Jewish mind." Like Arnold, The Jewish Chronicle

¹⁰³Ibid., 7: 353-4.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 7: 355.

recognizes that "there can be scarcely any doubt as to the fact that it is the New Testament which is assailed by men of the Tübingen school."¹⁰⁵ But its Jewish readers should take little consolation in the knowledge that the New Testament rather than the "faith of the Jew" is assailed by these scholars because their work tends to weaken the general position of religion in society.¹⁰⁶ According to The Jewish Chronicle, all those concerned about the future of England's religious life should be aware of these critical developments.

Moreover, the relationship between Christ's Jewishness and his divinity is given special attention in a series of articles appearing in the 1860s. The Jewish Chronicle argues that Christian theologians who downplay Christ's divinity must account for his teachings in some way. In doing so, they need to recognize that his religious and social training are drawn from the Jewish society in which he lived:

The discrowned Jesus...is wholly a Jew--of the highest type, it is true, but still a Jew, and consequently the Gospels, with the morality they teach are more purely humanly Jewish the less their subject is divine.¹⁰⁷

This argument becomes a way of linking the morality found in Judaism and Christianity since "Jesus, the man, could not have given more than he possessed no more than Jewish ground

¹⁰⁵"The Spirit of the Age," The Jewish Chronicle, 6 June 1873, p. 164.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷"Modern Judaism and the 'Edinburgh Quarterly,'" The Jewish Chronicle, 3 April 1863, p. 4.

yielded."¹⁰⁸ Those Christians who wish to "remove Christianity from its Jewish foundation," or who see it as displacing Judaism need to take into consideration Christ's Jewishness unless they recognize him as divinely inspired. In this way, "the ethical value of Christianity, may in many particulars, equal Judaism, but can in none exceed it."¹⁰⁹ Once this connection has been made it is impossible to overlook the "outpouring of Jewish influences on the European mind" which "has remained to this day in the form of Christianity."¹¹⁰ These ideas continue to have some currency even into the 1890s, when Simon refers to Jesus as "that illustrious Jew" who probably never "contemplated a future in which the truths of Judaism which he was uttering would be diffused throughout the world."¹¹¹ Consequently, Arnold's emphasis on Christ's Jewish origins is paralleled by the Anglo-Jewish community, although for very different reasons.

Arnold's argument for St. John's Gospel is also intimately tied to the political position of religion in a liberal society. Most obviously his argument is an attempt to restore the authenticity of the New Testament and to separate it from the issue of anti-Jewish propaganda, so that it will

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 5.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰"Modern Judaism and the 'Edinburgh Quarterly,'" The Jewish Chronicle, 10 April 1863, p. 4.

¹¹¹Simon, "The Mission of Judaism," The Fortnightly Review, 581.

not be abandoned by a "liberal" or "progressive" society. This seems to coincide with Arnold's general disapproval of "modern liberalism" with the "barrenness and insufficiency of the revolutionary formulas" that are supposed to substitute for Christianity. He further attacks the "secularists" for thinking that "their ideas of revolution and liberty...could at all do for that world what Christianity had done for it...."¹¹² He parallels abandoning the Fourth Gospel to other changes in British institutions that are advocated by "modern liberals": "To reject the Fourth Gospel bids fair even to become, like disestablishment...a regular article of our Liberal creed...."¹¹³ However, his work indirectly exposes the problem confronted by Christianity in a "modern liberal state": how to teach or preserve religious texts that disparage members of a society that is supposed to accept and protect religious freedom. By arguing that the "anti-Jewish" component of the Gospel rests on the "misunderstanding" of the Greek writer, Arnold seems to imply that these texts do not embody ideas that are problematic for a society based on "liberty," or progressive ideas of religious freedom.

In this way, "culture" takes on an especially significant role in a liberal society. The Greek writer's ignorance of Jewish practices allowed him to create a text full of "misunderstandings" and in this case, to further intolerance.

¹¹²Arnold, Complete Prose Works, 7: 379.

¹¹³Ibid., 7: 282.

Arnold argues that for a "right understanding" of the Bible, the reader must recognize that the language is "fluid, passing, and literary"; the reader also must have "some experience of how men have thought and expressed themselves, some flexibility of spirit are necessary and this is culture."¹¹⁴ He later adds that this type of criticism "calls into play the highest requisites for the study of letters; great and wide acquaintance with the history of the human mind...delicacy of perception...."¹¹⁵

This argues for an understanding and study of the Jewish milieu that would have shaped the "language" of Jesus and his apostles. Yet, in practice, Arnold seems to remove the "universal" or humanist values from their explicit social context, thus freeing Christianity or the Gospels from anti-Jewish rhetoric as later critics have appealed to universals to free works like Joseph Conrad's The Heart of Darkness from problematic racial ideologies. It is "culture" with its emphasis on "wide acquaintance" with human nature that should detect what are false and narrow prejudices, thus preventing the "mishandling of these texts." This use of "culture" becomes paradoxical by embodying the racial ambivalence that Cheyette argues characterizes Arnold's work. The dilemma here is that "culture" should help underscore the values implicit in the Gospel so that "misunderstanding" may be separated from

¹¹⁴Ibid., 6: 152.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 6: 276.

true "logion." However, the "cultured" individuals controlling this biblical interpretation have themselves internalized the value systems that they hope to critique. In this way, it is possible for Goldwin Smith to be considered a "cultured" and liberal individual but also a bigoted one.

The connection that Arnold establishes between "culture" and religion finds its most practical application in Jewish arguments against disestablishment of the Church. In Culture and Anarchy, "Hellenizing" or "sweetness and light" becomes identified with culture and is considered an antidote to the "narrow" views of Dissenters. In Literature and Dogma, "culture" is associated with "some experience of how men thought and express themselves, some flexibility of spirit are necessary." The practical result of combining "culture" and religion is its moderating influence on militant Dissenters, who were often active in movements directed at converting Jews to Christianity. For nineteenth-century Jews, this moderating influence of "culture" is seen as a way of avoiding the propagation of religious prejudice. Rather than advocate disestablishment as might be expected, The Jewish Chronicle supports the State Church because of its "religious moderation." The paper does not explicitly refer to Arnold's work, but it shares his perspective on the importance of the State Church and that of "culture."

The Jewish Chronicle repeatedly identifies the Church of England with the cause of religious freedom, and the political

and social stability of the Jewish community. In "The Jews and the Church of England" (1873), the paper argues that while Jews in Parliament did not vote on this issue out of good taste, it was not "one merely affecting the Protestant community" but "it is one of those political questions which are apparently sectarian, but not really so."¹¹⁶ The Church helps support "liberties and the maintenance of order," but it is also tolerant: "Secure in its position the State Church could afford to be tolerant, and could safely avoid persecuting persons of different opinions."¹¹⁷ In general, the paper considers the Anglican views as moderate in comparison to Catholics and Nonconformists so that the Church represents "freedom" not "authority" by providing stability and preventing other groups from grabbing power. It is the "embodiment of a middle course between fanaticism and irreligion" in contrast to the "conversionist onslaught" of Dissenters who continually threaten religious freedom.

As the debate over disestablishment continues, the relationship between the Church and State is characterized in terms that closely parallel Arnold's assessment of that between religion and "culture." In "The Nonconformists and the Church" (1876), The Jewish Chronicle maintains its position that "Christianity, it is acknowledged, is an aggressive

¹¹⁶"The Jews and the Church of England," The Jewish Chronicle, 20 May 1873, 149.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

religion, the [Catholic] Church is militant."¹¹⁸ It is intolerant of other groups, and "its chief argument for combatting all other religions and aiming at their destruction is that they are false...."¹¹⁹ The power of this conviction in the mind of a Christian has a long history, illustrating "the amount of cruelty used for the attainment of an object considered legitimate," and further suggesting that "pure Christianity as springing from the pages of the New Testament, is not that refreshing civiliser of mankind...."¹²⁰

After establishing this long history of Christian fanaticism, The Jewish Chronicle argues that "the cause of humanity and general progress is tied to State Church," because it promises to control religious fanaticism. Arnold himself says that "the State is the religion of all its citizens, without the fanaticism of any of them."¹²¹ The paper seems to parallel this view by noting that "men of one single idea...are proverbially dangerous," and such a state of mind must be "remedied by [letting] in a stream of ideas," so that even the weakest groups like Jews will be protected from its narrowness.¹²² The Church of England by "its intimate

¹¹⁸"The Nonconformists and the Church," The Jewish Chronicle, 11 February 1876, p. 737.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid., 737.

¹²¹Arnold, Complete Prose Works, 5: 193.

¹²²"The Nonconformists and the Church," 737.

association with the pliable State" acquires the "flexibility" necessary to keep up with change, and becomes "a cue to all sects...to aspire to a higher level." According to the Jewish Chronicle, the influence of the State on the Church acts in much the same way as Arnold's description of "culture" and religion. It raises the "intellectual" tone, and prevents fanaticism, so that both Church and State complement rather than hinder each other:

An Established Church, such as the English, acts as the undesigned moderator between sects, and elevates the intellectual tone of all of them. If the follies, extravagances and fanaticism of sectarianism are not carried to a much wider extent...it is to the tacit yet effective influence of the Church....¹²³

This union also carries with it an "educational" mission of sorts, offering potential social as well as political advantages. The "union of the two institutions" requires that "the Church must take care that her ministers should be fit associates for the servants of the State."¹²⁴ Thus similar education must be provided for both the "minister" and the "servant of the state," since they must work with each other so that "the secular knowledge imparted to the one because [there] will be a necessity for it in the dealings of man with man, is also acquired by the other, because equality of culture must be maintained...."¹²⁵ This secular training has

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Ibid.

the added advantage of fostering religious toleration, since "the future minister is prepared to become a man of more than one set of ideas. The foundation for general culture is laid, and he is prepared to appreciate and promote it in others."¹²⁶ The paper's editorials on disestablishment clearly base their underlying arguments on assumptions that parallel Arnold's idea of "culture" as a "moderating" influence on religion.

Arnold's multiple roles of educator, cultural critic, and religious writer all converge in these arguments over disestablishment. Like Arnold, the Jewish community supports religious values but it also sees the need for "flexibility" and tolerance. This is to be instilled in ministers and the general public through the educational process by combining secular and religious education. The debates over disestablishment indicate that the political stability of the Jew in post-emancipation society is tied, at least partly, to the tempering effects of "culture" on religion. It suggests that Arnold's relationship to the Anglo-Jewish community, and that of his work to the formation of an Anglo-Jewish identity, must be characterized in terms of nineteenth-century ideologies rather than a simple assessment of philo-Semitism or anti-Semitism. Such issues such as disestablishment link Arnold to the Jewish community in ways that are not readily apparent. Thus, this discussion illustrates the need to

¹²⁶Ibid.

consider Arnold's work as well as the formation of Anglo-Jewish identity as part of a complex cultural matrix.

CHAPTER IX

GEORGE ELIOT AND HER LITERARY REPUTATION

In "The Press, the Stage, and the Jews" (1870), The Jewish Chronicle contrasts the tolerance of English society with the unflattering caricatures of Jews that continued to appear in literary works. It describes how both political and social reforms have alleviated the stigma associated with being Jewish:

In truth, these attacks have ceased in society, and in all other paths of life's action....In the social circle, in the universities and schools, in the arenas of intellect, art, and public service; in the senate, the exchange, the mart and the bar; prejudice against the Jew scarcely exists at all; or if a faint shadow arise at times, it is soon dispelled.¹

English institutions are no longer allowed to perpetuate prejudice against Jews by denying them access to schools, the senate, or the exchange. According to The Jewish Chronicle, even less overt expressions of prejudice are frowned upon, since their "faint shadow" is "soon dispelled." However, the literary world remains untouched by this "institutional" suppression of prejudice so that the "fiction press...instead of leading or preceding public opinion and the public movement

¹"The Press, the Stage, and the Jews," The Jewish Chronicle, 27 May 1870, p. 7.

of thought, [is] greatly behind both."² This argument initially implies that literary representations of Jews are inconsequential, since England has become more tolerant in spite of the "romantic or fiction press."

However, The Jewish Chronicle casts doubt on this narrative of the continued growth of toleration in England, when it explains why the literary representations of Jews are "of more gravity than some persons seem disposed to consider."³ The paper identifies both the press and the stage as exercising an "occult" power over their audiences "because the stage addresses itself to the senses, and the press to the minds of all classes." Furthermore, "literary writings of reputation" are of special concern since they occupy "a certain position in the library and on the social table," making them well-known to the reading public. Novels with such "reputations" continually represent the "Jewish character" as "invested with unpleasant and ridiculous attributes" such as those of "a mongrel," and as speakers of "broken English jargon." In addition, "the word Jew is used as correlative with money-lender--money-lender of a low type, of course." The arguments supplied here by The Jewish Chronicle indicate that literary representations of the Jew significantly influence public opinion of the community as a whole.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

The paper also alludes to ways that literature participates in the organization of social and political relations. It is specifically concerned with the ability of literary representations to reinforce negative cultural assumptions about Jews. By fostering attitudes of intolerance, literary representations may indirectly cause Jews to distance themselves from the community in order to avoid the stigmas associated with Jewishness. The paper explains that "many persons of weak mind and cowardly spirit have been induced to abandon their ancestral faith by an apprehension of that very obloquy."⁴ While The Chronicle expresses its disapproval of these Jews by describing them as "weak-minded," it also suggests that the "attacks" on the Jews by the press and the stage must be stopped:

It is truly important that we should use every effort to discountenance and reprehend attacks made against our community, for the sake of our denominational position in this land, and for the sake of preventing weak-minded...Jews...from abandoning the fold from a foolish...apprehension of public opinion.⁵

Rather than dismissing literary caricatures of Jews as exerting benign social pressures, they are seen as disrupting the internal cohesiveness of the community, and the "denominational position," or status of the Jews as a religious minority in national politics.

The injury done to the community's "denominational

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

position" is the result of literary representations that portray the Jews as "foreign" or "alien." The paper insists on the importance of Jews being "well considered by their countrymen," and thought of as a "section" of the nation rather than as "aliens":

English Jews are not foreigners; they are no more to be regarded as aliens than English Quakers; scarcely so much so as English Catholics, who owe allegiance to a foreign temporal prince, the Pontiff of Rome.⁶

These comments align the Jewish community with other denominational minorities in England so that the Jew can be shown to equally deserve the title "Englishman." Consequently, literary representations of the Jew participate in larger political debates that influence the ability of this community to function as part of the nation. The Jewish Chronicle has convincingly demonstrated the "gravity" of such representations, while also revealing the uncertainty of English tolerance, since the Jewish "denominational position" is dependent on the whims of public opinion.

Finally, the paper links the production of literary works with the morality of society. The "stage and novel-press" needs to acknowledge that its true "mission" is to "censor" immorality and teach moral good:

We would gladly see the stage and novel-press what it ought to be--a guide of public opinion, a censor of immorality, a teacher of the morals. We would gladly see both novelist and dramatist rise to the height of their mission....But so long as they cater to public folly by distorting facts and holding up to ridicule and obloquy

⁶Ibid.

whole classes of their fellow-countrymen, our pen...shall ever be used to indicate the evil....⁷

The paper once again draws attention to the contingent nature of tolerance in England by noting that the novelists "cater to public folly" with their caricature of Jews. If even the "faintest shadow" of prejudice is immediately "dispelled," then "the stage and novel-press" should find it difficult "to ridicule...whole classes of their fellow-countrymen."

"The Press, the Stage, and the Jews" provides a narrative of nineteenth-century English life that emphasizes toleration of the Jews, so that prejudices are either effaced or restricted to the "stage and novel-press." Such narratives seem to have the dual function of convincing the reader that Jewishness is no longer a liability, and of fostering a sense of the community's politically stable position in English society. In this instance, unflattering literary representations of the Jew seem to threaten The Jewish Chronicle's reassuring image of Anglo-Jewish life by drawing attention to the contingency of its political position, and to the social prejudices that Jews continued to confront. By ascribing to literary representations an "occult power" enabling them to "guide public opinion," the paper suggests that they have a significant role in the fashioning of Anglo-Jewish identity.

The publication of Daniel Deronda (1876) seems to bring

⁷Ibid.

to fruition the desire of The Jewish Chronicle for a novel that would lead "the public movement of thought" with regards to the Jews. Anglo-Jewish critics found the novel noteworthy because of its sympathetic and carefully researched portrait of the Jews, but also because it was written by a prominent English author. George Eliot's publication of Daniel Deronda made her a compelling example of the progress made towards the toleration of Jews in the nineteenth century. This chapter will briefly consider how biographical narratives constructed about the development of Eliot's attitudes towards Jews are also used to demonstrate the growth of toleration in Victorian England. Such critical practices tend to obscure the contingent nature of toleration towards Anglo-Jews that characterizes both the novel and English society at large. However, this discussion will not attempt to make conclusive statements about Eliot's intellectual development or her attitudes towards Anglo-Jews. The point here is to demonstrate how the construction of biographical narratives takes on an import that reaches far beyond Eliot's personal convictions, and to consider the implications of such narratives for the critical history of the novel.

Nineteenth-century reviewers frequently combine their critical assessment of Daniel Deronda with commentary about its ability to generate sympathy for the Jewish cause. With the publication of Middlemarch, Eliot was recognized as an author of "literary writings of reputation," so that her

account of the Jewish community gained importance from her prior success. Hermann Adler regarded the publication of Daniel Deronda as "marking an epoch in the history of the estimate which is accorded to Judaism in the literature of England."⁸ He compares it to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's Nathan der Wiese, considered one of the most sympathetic accounts of Jews ever written. Similarly, James Picciotto recognizes George Eliot as "the first living artist in fiction in the English language [who] has thought the modern Jews worthy of special study."⁹ Her work is "no hasty or superficial glance over the externals of Judaism" but shows that "she has read their books, inquired into their modes of thought, searched their traditions, accompanied them to the synagogue."¹⁰ The Jewish press identifies her novel as a corrective to the "canon of fiction" that has long resisted "mak[ing] a Jew the hero of a story," or "enlist[ing] the sympathies of the reader in his favor."¹¹ The publication of Daniel Deronda seems especially significant in the evolution of "Anglo-Jewish identity," specifically because it is recognized by reviewers as a major work in the "literature of

⁸"The Rev. Dr. Hermann Adler on 'Daniel Deronda,'" The Jewish Chronicle, 15 December 1876, p. 586.

⁹James Picciotto, "Deronda the Jew," review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Gentleman's Magazine 241 (November 1876): 594.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., 593.

England," and the "English language."

Furthermore, their praise of the novel embodies the assumption that it has the power to influence social prejudices. Daniel Deronda functions as "a noble vindication of a long maligned race" so by its very publication, represents an act of tolerance by a major English author:

The authoress...despises that vulgar prejudice which arrogates every virtue to Christians and Christians only, and would leave the professors of other religions in the cold shade of contempt and ignominy.¹²

As The Jewish Chronicle's comment here implies, it is not simply that the novel "vindicates" the Jews, but the "authoress" herself "despises...vulgar prejudice." The novel also allows Jewish reviewers to once again link toleration to the process of education. It observes "that no thinking person can rise from perusal of 'Daniel Deronda' without an enhanced appreciation of the beauties of the Jewish faith and an increased sympathy for its followers."¹³ Eliot's novel both disseminates a sympathetic portrayal of Jewish life while also "teaching" or forming the "morals" of the reading public. This enthusiasm over Daniel Deronda as representative of a shift in the traditional canon of English literature, and as "a teacher of the morals" or toleration, indicates how it confirms the idea of "progress," and the place of the Jew in the development of the nation. By entering into the English

¹²"The Rev. Dr. Hermann Adler on 'Daniel Deronda,'" 586.

¹³Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 8 September 1876, p. 357.

literary tradition, Daniel Deronda has provided the Jew with "cultural" as well as political ties to England.

The availability of a wide range of biographical materials allows twentieth-century critics to construct more detailed narratives of Eliot's intellectual development, such as those found in the studies of William Baker and Mary Kay Temple. Eliot's letter to John Sibree, Jr. in February 1848 is frequently referenced in these accounts. This letter indicates how Eliot's reading of Tancred prompts her to dismiss the Jews as "low grade," and to make other equally unflattering comments about the "race":

The fellowship of race, to which D'Israeli exulting refers the munificence of Sidonia, is so evidently an inferior impulse which must ultimately be superseded that I wonder even he, Jew as he is, dares to boast of it. My Gentile nature kicks most resolutely against any assumption of superiority in the Jews, and is almost ready to echo Voltaire's vituperation. I bow to the supremacy of Hebrew poetry, but much of their early mythology and almost all their history is utterly revolting....The very exaltation of their idea of a national deity into a spiritual monotheism seems to have been borrowed from the other oriental tribes. Everything specifically Jewish is of a low grade.¹⁴

She goes on to add that "extermination up to a certain point seems to be the law for the inferior races--for the rest, fusion both for physical and moral ends."¹⁵ This letter has been interpreted in a variety of ways, ranging from an attack on Disraeli's theories of racial superiority to an argument

¹⁴George Eliot, The George Eliot Letters, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 1: 246-7.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 1: 246.

for the disappearance of Jews as a distinctive religious and racial group.

However, the significance attached to Eliot's letter for this study is the place it occupies in the narratives about the growth of toleration in Victorian society. References to this letter not only characterize Eliot's changed attitudes, but they also heighten the drama of liberal progress that is used to characterize the nineteenth century. On one hand, if Eliot had not written Daniel Deronda, her derogatory remarks may have simply passed into the larger body of anti-Semitic rhetoric produced by the press and other writers. On the other hand, the publication of Daniel Deronda, though still a significant literary event, would not argue so compelling for the continued growth of tolerance in English society. Eliot's intellectual development itself is used to demonstrate how this social progress is possible.

Daniel Deronda has also prompted speculation about the factors that influenced Eliot's decision to write a novel about Jewish life. In 1870, The Jewish Chronicle suggests that the roots of toleration are to be found in "the arenas of intellect" and "social contact." Eliot's study of Jewish history and religious texts seems to support this perspective. As early as 1892, the paper informs its readers that a copy of Solomon Maimon's Autobiography, which Daniel Deronda purchases during his first trip to Ram's bookstore, was found in Eliot's library. The paper describes numerous marginal comments that

Eliot made in her copy:

The few words in which George Eliot dismisses the book in her novel would hardly lead one to gather how carefully and conscientiously she had read the volume....¹⁶

She made numerous corrections in Maimon's book such as marking historical events given in the wrong sequence, and in one instance, highlighting an incorrect interpretation of the Talmud. The Jewish Chronicle also notes that "it is interesting to find George Eliot defending Judaism against Maimon" when he criticizes certain rabbinical practices, and interpretations of the Law.¹⁷ Consequently, this article would seem to lend further support to the idea that Eliot's "intellectual" pursuits contributed not only to the accuracy of her novel, but also to the tolerance for Jews that she desires her work to perpetuate.

More recent studies of Eliot's intellectual pursuits also implicitly argue that as her knowledge of Judaism increased so did her appreciation of it. However, this connection may be somewhat misleading since her studies of Jewish history began long before her letter to Sibree describing Jews as "low grade." Gordon S. Haight explains that "her interest in Jewish history, dating from the youthful attempt to complete a chart of Ecclesiastical history, deepened as she translated

¹⁶ "Books and Bookmen," The Jewish Chronicle, 30 September 1892, p. 14.

¹⁷Ibid.

Strauss and Spinoza." ¹⁸ William Baker dates her earliest study of the Jews to her reading of the Jewish historian Josephus in 1838.¹⁹ Several decades later, her general interest in Judaism gives way to an exhaustive reading of Jewish texts as she prepared to write Daniel Deronda. Eliot studied the works of major Jewish historians including Leopold Zunz, Abraham Geiger, and Heinrich Graetz. Her study of these and other historians helped "provide the intellectual framework for the points of view expressed by her characters," especially during the debates over Jewish assimilation that took place in the *Hand and Banner*.²⁰ Eliot's interest in Jewish mysticism is evidenced by her references to the Cabalistic doctrines and quotes from the medieval Jewish poet, Jehuda Halevy.²¹ In addition, Mary Kay Temple outlines Eliot's study of Emanuel Deutsch's Literary Remains, noting numerous passages that are copied into her notebooks, and the development of parallel themes in her novel.²²

While this discussion describes Eliot's forays into

¹⁸ Gordon S. Haight, George Eliot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 469.

¹⁹This general discussion of Eliot's Jewish studies is taken from William Baker, George Eliot and Judaism, Romantic Reassessment series, no. 45 (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1975).

²⁰Ibid., 143.

²¹Ibid., 174.

²²Mary Kay Temple, "Emanuel Deutsch's Literary Remains: A New Source for George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*," South Atlantic Review 54 (1989): 59-62.

"arenas of intellect," there is ample evidence to suggest that "social contact" may have influenced her attitudes towards the Jews. Baker argues that perhaps the most pivotal experience in the development of her attitudes towards Judaism was the visit that she and George Henry Lewes made to Germany in 1854.²³ It included attending a production of Lessing's Nathan der Weise which explores the issue of religious tolerance. Both Eliot and Lewes recorded in their diaries visits with various Jewish intellectuals while in Germany.²⁴ Eliot was also introduced to the writings of Heinrich Heine and his attitudes towards German Jewish life through her acquaintance with Jewish intellectuals. On later trips to Europe, she and Lewes also visited the Prague Ghetto, and an Italian synagogue on the Sabbath.²⁵ Haight recounts another visit to Germany in 1873 during which Lewes was charged with buying books on "Jewish subjects" for Eliot's new novel, and also with accompanying her to synagogues in Hamburg and

²³This discussion of Eliot's trip to Germany is based on Baker, 30-37.

²⁴Eliot had many more Jewish friends and acquaintances than can easily be discussed here. In his exhaustive study of her Jewish interests, Baker mentions her friendship with the poetess Mathilda Blind Cohen (1841-96) who later wrote a biography of Eliot, and her acquaintance with a number of Jewish refugees from the European revolutions of the 1840s including Theodor Goldstucker (1821-72) who became professor of Sanskrit at University College London. See Baker, 18 and 31.

²⁵Baker, 81.

Mainz.²⁶

However, Eliot's biographers seem to be in general agreement that her close friendship with Emanuel Deutsch was the greatest influence on her attitude towards Jews and Jewish history.²⁷ He began as her Hebrew teacher, but as their friendship developed, Deutsch's correspondence with Eliot revealed the social prejudices still encountered by Jews. Both Deutsch and Eliot felt that his Jewishness had prevented him from being promoted to Queen's Librarian, even after he had firmly established himself as a serious scholar.²⁸ In her recent study of their relationship, Temple observes that Eliot felt a great deal of sympathy for Deutsch, who was unable to return to the East before dying of cancer.²⁹ She demonstrates that Eliot's research for her novel drew extensively on Deutsch's essays contained in the Literary Remains (1873), and that they had a mutual desire for

²⁶Haight, 472.

²⁷Emanuel Deutsch (1831-73) arrived in London in 1855, and found employment cataloguing books at the British Museum. Haight notes that Eliot first met him in 1866 at the house of Frederick Lehmann, a mutual friend. Haight, 469-70.

²⁸Baker, 132-3.

²⁹Her relationship to Deutsch also provides insights into Eliot's desire to visit Palestine. Lady Emily Strangford edited Deutsch's writings as well as traveled to Palestine herself. Eliot seems to have corresponded with her in order to obtain information about making such a trip. Haight indicates that "Lady Strangford's reply to another query shows Eliot seriously considering a journey to the Near East to gather local colour for Daniel Deronda." He believes that Eliot and Lewes would have gone to Palestine, but their poor health prevented the trip. Haight, 473-4.

religious toleration.³⁰ Like other contemporary critics, Temple considers Deutsch the source for Eliot's Jewish visionary, Mordecai. This use of Deutsch as the source for Mordecai illustrates the intersection of "intellectual" pursuits and "social contact," that The Jewish Chronicle as well as certain twentieth-century critics see as contributing to the growth of tolerance.

Eliot's own account of her reasons for writing Daniel Deronda also supports this perspective of the origins of toleration. One of her most famous letters, written to Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, shows that as a novelist Eliot feels she can help foster toleration by offering a new perspective of the relationship between Jews and Christians:

But precisely because I feel that the usual attitude of Christians towards Jews is--I hardly know whether to say more impious or more stupid when viewed in the light of their professed principles, I therefore felt urged to treat Jews with such sympathy and understanding as my nature and knowledge could attain to....There is nothing I should care more to do, if it were possible, than to rouse the imagination of men and women to a vision of human claims in those races of their fellow-men who most differ from them in customs and beliefs.³¹

It is through "sympathy" and "knowledge" that she will appeal to both the "senses" and the "minds" of her readers. Her letters also reveal that her moral responsibilities as an author were given foremost consideration as she completed Daniel Deronda. In October of 1876, Eliot writes to Haim

³⁰Temple, 58.

³¹George Eliot, The George Eliot Letters, 6: 301.

Guedalla that "it is my function as an artist to act (if possible) for good on the emotions and conceptions of my fellow-men."³² Similarly, her letter to John Blackwell indicates her intention to shape the moral vision of her readers: "This is what I wanted to do--to widen the English vision a little in that direction and let in a little conscience and refinement."³³ Her intense expressions of moral responsibility as well as her exhaustive study of Judaism have influenced the critical history of the novel, because they so strongly support a vision of uncompromised tolerance towards Jews.

In the last few decades, some critics have begun to question the view that Eliot's novel is the classic example of Victorian philo-Semitism. Their critiques tend to separate Eliot's moral sentiments (as they are expressed in her letters), and her social contacts with Jews from the portraits of Jewish characters in the novel. This close scrutiny of her Jewish characters reveals how they often perpetuate elements of intolerance that Eliot herself felt were "impious" or "stupid." Unlike nineteenth-century reviewers who used the novel for immediate social and political purposes, and twentieth-century critics interested in positioning Eliot in the liberal humanist tradition, these scholars tend to see the novel as ambiguously affirming and challenging various

³²Ibid., 6: 289.

³³Ibid., 6: 304.

cultural assumptions about Jews. The emergence of these critical assessments of the novel highlights the complexity of the historical and cultural construction of the "Jew" in Daniel Deronda.

Both Edgar Rosenberg and Anne Aresty Naman see the Jewish characters in the novel as stereotypes. Rosenberg, whose study traces the development of Jewish characters in a wide range of English fiction, argues that Eliot introduces a new stereotype of the Jew with her portrayal of Mordecai:

In Mordecai Eliot had it almost in her to create something like a new myth...the myth of the Jew as political man, as social prophet and Isaiah reborn, who takes Sheva's [the victimized Jew] grievances as a point of departure for political action, and who translates Sheva's defensive plea for greater tolerance into a positive plea for greater national or racial or territorial recognition.³⁴

He questions the view that Daniel Deronda is a realistic portrait of Jews by noting the emergence of the positive stereotype of the Jewish leader, and the limitation placed on other Jewish characters who act as representatives of ideological viewpoints, making them seem like artificial constructions. In contrast, Naman argues that Eliot developed her characters by relying on "Jewish types" rather than on "prejudiced negative stereotypes."³⁵ She uses a variety of biographical data to show that Eliot wanted her readers to

³⁴Edgar Rosenberg, From Shylock to Svengali (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1960), 164.

³⁵Anne Aresty Naman, The Jew in the Victorian Novel (New York: AMS Press, 1980), 161.

regard her Jewish characters just as they would any others. She concludes "that a Jewish character in a Victorian novel is at once a product of prejudice and art," because writers such as Eliot were unable to abandon either the "negative stereotypes" or "Jewish types" even as they attempted to expose them as wrong.³⁶

Susan Meyer extends this critique by arguing that the novel not only embodies stereotypes of Jews, but is anti-Semitic in its description of them, and in its "proto-Zionist" vision that indirectly advocates the removal of Jews from England. Meyer sees the treatment of Jews in the novel as a reflection of both Eliot's desire to maintain a stable social hierarchy, and to advocate a "Zionist" movement:

The proto-Zionism of the novel is the central metaphor through which Eliot simultaneously expunges female impulses to transgress social boundaries and expunges those who penetrate England's national boundaries.³⁷

Eliot's identification of Jews with female selfhood acts to remove both sets of "transgressors" from England. Jews will be used for the British government as colonists in the East, while the reformed "female transgressors" will resume their position in the social hierarchy. In addition, Meyer characterizes Daniel Deronda as "rife with anti-Semitism" because "it repeatedly associates Jews with dirt" and focusses

³⁶Ibid., 203.

³⁷Susan Meyer, "'Safely to Their Own Borders': Proto-Zionism, Feminism, and Nationalism in Daniel Deronda," ELH 60 (1993): 734.

on the greed of Jewish pawnbrokers.³⁸ The characters of Mordecai, Mirah and Daniel are idealizations of the "refined" Jew. For example, Daniel exhibits this quality because he approaches an ideal "Englishness," while Mordecai is "refined" because "his Jewish life burns itself away into a Zionist ideal."³⁹ For Meyer, Daniel Deronda is antithetical both to Jewish distinctiveness, and to the survival of the community in England.

By situating his study of Daniel Deronda in the context of the social and political concerns of the nineteenth century, Cheyette argues that Eliot's critique of "liberal progress" is intimately linked to the Jew.⁴⁰ The novel is critical of "liberal progress," because it has encouraged the development of an English society that is devoid of "sense of history or purpose." Eliot simultaneously uses the Jewish religion to exemplify a spiritual alternative while also emphasizing the "racial fixity" of the Jews. As a result, the novel embodies an "unresolved tension" between "the fixed Semitic particularity" and "all-inclusive universalism." By using her Jewish characters to represent "ideals," Eliot further complicates their function in the novel since they "can signify both a quasi-biblical, spiritual community rooted in the past as well as a degenerate contemporary 'race' that

³⁸Ibid., 745-6.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Cheyette, 44.

is in need of immediate 'improvement.'"⁴¹ Consequently, Cheyette sees the novel as perpetuating an "ambivalent Semitic discourse" that is to act as an antidote to "a materialist liberalism."

Finally, Lynn Hunt argues that Daniel Deronda was influential in the development of increasingly complex portraits of Jewish life found in the novels written later in the century. She looks specifically at the dynamic relationship between Eliot's novel and Amy Levy's Reuben Sachs (1888). With her controversial satire of Jewish life, Levy breaks away from the Victorian literary convention of depicting "idealized Jews" that Eliot's novel helped establish. Even though Levy abandoned the literary conventions of Daniel Deronda, the novel still remained an important component in shaping her own work:

At the same time, she uses George Eliot's last book to widen the significance of her own Jewish novel, and she relies on the resonance created by the intertextual relationship between the two books to make the novel accessible to the mostly gentile reading public.⁴²

Levy heightens this "resonance" by making frequent allusions to Eliot's novel in Reuben Sachs. The "corrupt gentile world of Daniel Deronda" allowed Levy to "create a context that makes the negative side of Jewish life in Reuben Sachs look

⁴¹Ibid., 48.

⁴²Linda Hunt, "Amy Levy and the 'Jewish Novel': Representing Jewish Life in the Victorian Period," Studies in the Novel 26 (1993): 236.

ordinary instead of appalling."⁴³ In this way, Levy was able to move beyond the practice of creating "idealized Jews" to those that are not stereotypical "bad Jews," but complex characters. Hunt's study is especially important because it shows the dynamic relationship that existed between these two novels, and suggests the complexity of Jewish response to Daniel Deronda.

This study will add yet another dimension to this ongoing critical debate by analyzing the responses of nineteenth-century Jewish reviewers to Daniel Deronda in the context of Anglo-Jewish communal interests. I have already indicated how Jewish reviewers used Daniel Deronda to support their vision of an increasingly tolerant Victorian society. They relied on available biographical details about Eliot's intellectual development provide further evidence of this social progress and in doing so, left a critical legacy that furthered the construction of liberal humanist tradition by a number of twentieth-century critics. In addition, their responses provide significant insights about the novel's participation in debates over Anglo-Jewish identity, and the political and social concerns of Jewish communal leaders. Eliot's portrait of Jewish spirituality was particularly significant to them because Victorian Christians often characterized Judaism as devoid of this component. Consequently, the reviews of Jewish critics indicate how Eliot's novel provided an important

⁴³Ibid., 251.

argument for the spirituality of Judaism. They also suggest that the Jewish leaders used the novel to reinforce a number of communal values, and in some cases, it was advanced as providing models for Jewish behavior.

However, the repeated emphasis on the novel as a vehicle of tolerance obscures the social and political concerns of Anglo-Jewish reviewers who endorse this perspective. They repeatedly link the fictional image of the Jew to communal stability and focus on aspects of the novel that enhance the standing of the Jewish community in English society. Jewish reviewers often ignore or find ways to suppress anti-Semitic attitudes towards Jews. In particular, they avoid criticizing the novel's practice of singling out Jews as "aliens" who will leave England for their "homeland." The Zionist vision propounded in the novel only worked to further complicate the conception of the Jew as English citizen and to highlight the contingent nature of English tolerance. The following chapters will analyze the responses of Jewish reviewers to the novel in order to show how they attempt to reconcile this double vision of spiritualized Judaism and the alien Jew while also attempting to construct an "Anglo-Jewish" identity in a post-emancipation society.

CHAPTER X
THE HISTORICITY OF MORDECAI
AND THE DEBATE OVER JEWISH SPIRITUALITY

In an article entitled "Spinoza" appearing in The Fortnightly Review (1866), George Henry Lewes recalled that "about thirty years ago a small club of students held weekly meetings in the parlour of a tavern in Red Line Square, Holborn."¹ The members of the club came from a variety of backgrounds ranging from "a journeyman watchmaker" to "a student of anatomy," but they were all drawn to the meetings to discuss the "vexed questions of philosophy." A sense of good fellowship pervaded the atmosphere when the group was "seated round the fire, smoking their cigars and pipes, and drinking coffee, grog, or ale." Yet, their intellectual pursuits were not hampered by the coziness of the scene, since these "philosophers did really strike sparks which illuminate[d] each other's minds." These "pleasant noises of argument and laughter" provided the context for Lewes's first exposure to the Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza.

Only one member of the club was adequately familiar with German to translate fragments of Spinoza's work found in the

¹George Henry Lewes, "Spinoza," The Fortnightly Review 4 (April 1866): 385.

periodicals of the day. Lewes described the striking character of the "watchmaker" turned philosophy teacher and translator:

[He was] a German Jew, named Cohn, or Kohn, whom we all admired as a man of astonishing subtlety and logical force, no less than of sweet personal worth. He remains in memory as a type of philosophic dignity. A calm, meditative, amiable man, by trade a journeyman watchmaker, very poor, with weak eyes and chest; grave and gentle in demeanor; incorruptible, even by the seductions of vanity....²

Like the other members of the club, Lewes waited patiently for each of Cohn's methodical translations of Spinoza's work. It was to this man who embodied both "philosophic dignity" and the humility of a "journeyman watchmaker" that Lewes owed his first acquaintance with "the Hebrew thinker" to which the rest of his article pays tribute.

Ten years after the publication of Lewes's article, George Eliot describes a strikingly similar scene of good fellowship and "illuminating" argument in Daniel Deronda. During his search for the brother of the poor Jewish girl Mirah, Deronda meets Mordecai Cohen who works at a bookshop in the Jewish section of London. He is immediately struck by Mordecai's remarkable appearance which he likens to "a physiognomy as that might possibly have been seen in a prophet of Exile."³ As Daniel contemplates this meeting with Mordecai, the narrator compares this "prophet of Exile" to

²Ibid., 386-7.

³George Eliot, Daniel Deronda, ed. Barbara Hardy (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1967), 436.

Spinoza: "the consumptive-looking Jew, apparently a fervid student of some kind, getting his crust by a quiet handicraft, like Spinoza, fitted into none of Deronda's anticipations."⁴ This poor consumptive Jewish worker struggling to earn his wages while at the same time attempting to keep his intellect alive, recalls Lewes's description of Cohn. Eliot's reference to Spinoza also functions as an allusion to Lewes's article, and his description of the "journeyman watchmaker."

In addition, Deronda's association with Mordecai allows him access to a meeting of "The Philosophers," which like the club described by Lewes, is a group of "poor men given to thought."⁵ Mordecai and Deronda enter the Hand and Banner and find themselves in "the little parlour, hardly much more than fifteen feet square, where the gaslight shone through a slight haze of smoke." A group of men, ranging from a saddler to a copy clerk, are seated around the fireplace with a table filled with their drinks and pipes. Deronda observes Mordecai in the midst of this group: "a man steeped in poverty and obscurity, weakened by disease, consciously within the shadow of advancing death, but living an intense life in an invisible past and future."⁶ This man of German-Jewish origins, consumptive with failing eyesight, and watchmaker by trade, but with intense vision and intellectual acumen, cannot but

⁴Ibid., 528.

⁵Ibid., 580.

⁶Ibid., 592-3.

recall Lewes's description of Cohn in his article on Spinoza.

The striking similarity between the "Cohn" of Lewes's article and the character Mordecai in Eliot's novel was immediately recognized by a number of Jewish reviewers. The assumption by reviewers that Lewes's Cohn was the source for Eliot's character became so pervasive that both writers made numerous efforts to correct it. Eliot describes how before his death, Lewes repeatedly denied that Cohn was her source. In a letter written to Asher Isaac Myers in 1879, Eliot once again attempts to clear up this misunderstanding:⁷

I am not in the habit of reading print observations on my writings, but my husband informed me that various excellent persons had (with the best intention) repeated the mistaken statement that the Jew named Cohn, of whom he gave some recollections in the Fortnightly Review ten or twelve years ago, bore a resemblance to Mordecai, and was thus a guarantee that the character was not an impossible ideal. Mr. Lewes took several opportunities (in conversation) of pointing out that no such resemblance existed....⁸

Despite the numerous disclaimers, this connection frequently drawn by Jewish reviewers continued to be made in the periodical press. Its persistence seems to suggest that the reviewers were not solely interested in identifying the source for Mordecai's character.

⁷Asher Isaac Myers (1848-1902) joined the staff of The Jewish Chronicle in 1869, and eventually became an editor. He had an active interest in Anglo-Jewish history, and founded the Jewish Working Man's Club in 1872. Those members of his social circle who shared his intellectual interests formed the Maccabaeans Club. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Myers, Asher Isaac."

⁸Eliot, Letters, 7:95-6.

In fact, Jewish reviewers seemed much more concerned with demonstrating the historical reality of an individual like Mordecai than with establishing the source for George Eliot's character. This pre-occupation of certain Jewish reviewers was in part prompted by other critics who repeatedly argued that Eliot's portrait of Mordecai was unbelievable. For example, The Gentleman's Magazine describes Mordecai as "the most untypical of all untypical Jews, a poor workman in London with the brain of a scholar, the heart of a poet, and the soul of a prophet."⁹ The Fortnightly Review questions the existence of such "prophets" as Mordecai, and the possibility of their visions becoming realities: "Society has asked itself, are Hebrew prophets really to be found to-day in the back streets off Holborn, and is a gathering of the Israelites an event which may really happen to-morrow?"¹⁰ This reviewer admits that Mordecai is "a striking figure of romance," though not a convincing representative of Jewry:

But real, near, and living he does not seem in the same sense as most other figures in the story, including most of the Jews in it; as the broken-down...gambler who is the father of Mirah and Mordecai, the vulgar kind-hearted pawnbroker and his family...all these are brought on, with a few incisive and brilliant strokes, in the very lineaments of life.¹¹

The British Quarterly Review echoes this response by

⁹R[obert] E[dward] Francillon, "George Eliot's First Romance," The Gentleman's Magazine 241 (September 1876): 421.

¹⁰Sydney Colvin, review of Daniel Deronda, The Fortnightly Review, o.s., 26 (November 1876): 601.

¹¹Ibid., 605-6.

acknowledging that the scene of Mordecai teaching Jacob Hebrew poetry is "a piece of exquisite description, but does it give us a real man, and not rather an abstraction?"¹² However, The Academy questions the appropriateness of such a story as Mordecai's for fiction:

But the question here is whether the phase of Judaism now exhibited, the mystical enthusiasm for race and nation, has sufficient connexion with broad human feeling to be stuff for prose fiction to handle. We think that it has not....¹³

While these critics may be responding to the aesthetic qualities of Eliot's characterization, they also call into question both the ability of the Jewish character and Judaism to function as the source of this "striking figure of romance."

Neither James Picciotto nor Joseph Jacobs sees the comments made by these reviewers as limited to aesthetic failures in Eliot's characterization of Mordecai. Their response to such criticism is to draw attention to the lack of appreciation by Gentiles for Jewish thought and history. Picciotto suggests that the critics may have "considered the Jewish body [of the novel] too insignificant to be worth much discussion."¹⁴ By neglecting the "Jewish episodes," the Gentile critics "have slurred over some of the finest and most

¹²Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The British Quarterly Review 64 (October 1876): 491.

¹³George Saintsbury, review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Academy 10 (September 1876): 254.

¹⁴Picciotto, "Deronda the Jew," 595.

characteristic passages in the book," partly because they believe these scenes "possessed no general interest."¹⁵ Picciotto considers this neglect of the "Jewish episodes" as a failure of the critics in particular, but describes the "general public" as interested in the "many details of Hebrew life and customs." This interest is attributed to the influence of Judaism on Christianity:

Jewish thought is not entirely without influence in Gentile circles; and though the Hebrew personages in "Daniel Deronda" more immediately concern Israelites, yet there are several points and issues raised which more or less directly affect Christians and Christianity.¹⁶

Picciotto's conciliatory approach to the criticism of the novel emphasizes the Jewish contribution to the development of religion which should generate the widespread interest of the "general public" and inspire an appreciation for the "details of Hebrew life."

In contrast, Jacobs is far less diplomatic in his attack on the Gentile critics. The lack of interest and sympathy for Jews is rooted in the failure of Christians to recognize Judaism's standing as a religion:

and the readers of Daniel Deronda have refused painfully to assimilate the new idea of the Mordecai part of the book. This idea we take to be that Judaism stands on the same level as Christianity, perhaps even on a higher level, in point of rationality and capacity to satisfy

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

the wants of religious consciousness....¹⁷

Like Picciotto, Jacobs does not regard the Jewish scenes as aesthetically flawed and unable to capture the imagination of the critics, but attributes their apathy to the failure to recognize the influence of Judaism on its adherents. Christian readers should find nothing in this characterization of the "outer life of Judaism" that will "disturb [their] complacent feeling of superiority over Jews."¹⁸ However, Jacobs sees English Jews as indirectly contributing to the critical neglect of the novel, and its visionary character Mordecai:

English Judaism is without signs of life: the only working of the spirit, the abortive reform agitation, was due to a similar movement in Germany. And English Jews have themselves much to blame for the neglect that English criticism has shown for Mordecai.¹⁹

According to Jacobs, Anglo-Jews need to pay closer attention to their public image by correcting the misconception that the "home of spiritual Judaism" is Germany, or by drawing attention to the "working of the spirit" in the congregations of English Jews. The reception of the novel is directly linked to the public perception of Judaism in both Jacob's and Picciotto's responses to the reviewers.

Consequently, the debate over the existence of an actual

¹⁷Joseph Jacobs, "Mordecai: A Protest Against the Critics," review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, MacMillan's Magazine 36 (June 1877): 101.

¹⁸Ibid., 103.

¹⁹Ibid., 111.

historical figure such as Mordecai also takes shape as a discussion of the spirituality found in Judaism. While aspects of Eliot's novel are problematic, Jewish reviewers use Mordecai's character to exemplify not just the physical survival of the Jews, but also the preservation of their intellectual and spiritual pursuits. Mordecai's character illustrates how the poor scholar faced with overwhelming obstacles still manages to contribute to the wealth of Jewish studies. Yet, this debate encompasses not only an argument for Jewish spirituality, but also considerations on how it is to be maintained, so reviewers highlight aspects of the novel's characters that function to reinforce communal values. This chapter describes how the critical debates over the historicity of Mordecai's character also function to delineate the "spiritual" fitness of Judaism for nineteenth-century society. It will also show how the behavior of Mordecai and the novel's other characters is used to reinforce communal values the reviewers see as necessary for Jews to maintain their religious and ethnic identity as they participate in post-emancipation society.

Before analyzing the role of Daniel Deronda in this debate over "Jewish spirituality," it is necessary to describe the dynamic relationship that existed between Jewish reformers and their Christian critics. David Feldman's study of the reform movement in Britain provides ample evidence that Jews were very much aware of the Christian perception of Judaism's

spirituality.²⁰ As part of their conversion efforts, British evangelicals published numerous pamphlets that criticized Judaism for a wide range of faults. They repeatedly portrayed Jews as performing their rituals without any deep religious feelings. Feldman argues that various religious reforms instituted by Anglo-Jews seemed to be prompted by these evangelical critiques of Judaism. One outcome of these reforms was the increased emphasis on the "spiritual" aspects of Judaism. "Degenerate 'rabbinism'" was de-emphasized in favor of a more personal religion that overtly associated Judaism with "a religion of the 'spirit.'"²¹ The leader of the West End Synagogue, David Marks, characterized his ideas on religious reform "as an attempt to preserve Judaism from external attack" by minimizing rabbinical authority while lending greater emphasis to the "spirit of the ritual."²²

In fact, Feldman describes the far-reaching influence of this desire to publicly identify Judaism with the "religion of the 'spirit.'" The institution of more "decorous forms of worship" in the synagogue "encompassed a desire to find within Judaism a religion of the heart, and in this it echoed clearly the evangelical impulse."²³ Reforms included discouraging

²⁰This discussion of Jewish spirituality is based on the work of Feldman, 48-71.

²¹Ibid., 65.

²²Ibid., 58-9.

²³Ibid., 59.

informal conversations during the service, the recitation of prayers in unison, and the introduction of male choirs. The changes in these aspects of worship were used to dispel "the impression that Jews attended synagogue for any purpose other than prayer and spiritual elevation."²⁴ These reforms also helped to counter the claim that Jews were continually pre-occupied with material concerns, since "it was easy to see the materialism of the Jews' religion and the materialism of their worldly activities as reflecting each other."²⁵ This emphasis on the spiritual aspects of Judaism worked to refute the evangelical criticism of Judaism and rabbinism. In addition, it also helped to make Judaism more attractive to its own members by harmonizing religious practices with Victorian social conventions.

The novel also develops this perception of Judaism as a "religion of the heart," when Mordecai assumes his role as the poet and national prophet. Eliot repeatedly distinguishes Mordecai from the novel's other Jews by his "poetic" qualities. When Deronda first meets Mordecai in Ram's bookshop, he is reminded of "a prophet in exile" or "some New Hebrew poet of the medieval time."²⁶ This poetic quality attracts Deronda to Mordecai "who was certainly something out of the common way--as different as a Jew could well be from

²⁴Ibid., 65.

²⁵Ibid., 61-2.

²⁶Eliot, Daniel Deronda, 436.

Ezra Cohen."²⁷ He is the uncommon Jew who elicits Deronda's sympathy rather than inspiring feelings of repulsion as the Jewish pawnbroker Ezra Cohen does. Mordecai explains how he embraced his "spiritual destiny" in his youth by finding in himself the ability to further develop the continuity of his heritage:

It was a soul fully born within me, and it came in my boyhood. It brought its own world--a medieval world, where there were men who made the ancient language live again in new psalms of exile.²⁸

As the new poet and prophet of his people, he brings to life not only the rich cultural heritage and ancient language with his "bundle of Hebrew manuscripts," but the possibility of the rebirth of the nation. It is the role of poet to keep the national memory alive, so Mordecai is confronted with the task of "imprinting" his poetry on the mind of Ezra Cohen's young son in hopes, that his "words may rule him some day. Their meaning may flash out on him. It is so with a nation--after many days."²⁹ Mordecai must continually struggle with his spiritual insights and with his intense desire to keep "'away from...the garment of forgetfulness,/ Withering the heart.'"³⁰ All of these details of Mordecai's life illustrate how Judaism can engender spiritual growth in the

²⁷Ibid., 438.

²⁸Ibid., 555.

²⁹Ibid., 533.

³⁰Ibid., 534.

individual.

Mordecai's role as poet and prophet distinguishes him and his vision of Judaism from the materialistic Jew and his religious practices. When Mordecai begins the "solemn chanting" of the prayers on the Sabbath, Deronda observes how he differs from Ezra Cohen:

Not only his accent and tone, but in his freedom from the self-consciousness which has reference to others' approbation, there could hardly have been a stronger contrast to the Jew [Ezra Cohen] at the other end of the table.³¹

Mordecai has achieved this "freedom" by throwing off material desires, and having "wedded poverty" so that he could pursue Jewish religious studies without "reference to others' approbation." In fact, he is continually associated with poverty throughout the novel. He lives on the charity of the Cohens who provide a room for him, and must be provided with new clothes before meeting his sister. As the poor Jewish workman struggling to record his poetic vision, Mordecai is purged of the materialism so commonly used to describe other Jews.

In fact, Ezra Cohen contrasts to Mordecai as both an "unpoetic Jew" and as highly materialistic. Deronda is particularly struck by this "unpoetic" quality of Ezra, observing that "his phraseology was as little as possible like that of the Old Testament; and no shadow of a Suffering Race distinguished his vulgarity of soul from that of a prosperous

³¹Ibid., 451.

pink-and-white huckster of the purest English lineage."³² Ezra assures Daniel that there is nothing else he would rather do than own a pawn shop since "'it embraces the brass as well as the gold of the country. And a man who doesn't get money, sir, can't accommodate.'"³³ For Ezra, all is measured in terms of money, even such familial concerns as Mirah's return to her brother. While Mordecai utters thanks in Hebrew for her return, Cohen inquires about the possible relations with money and Mirah's "maintenance." The "good works" that the family has performed by taking care of Mordecai "is a property bearing interest."³⁴ This "vulgar" and "materialistic" Jew is generally taken to represent the "real" nature of the Jew in the nineteenth century. Although Cohen is shown as an attentive father and husband in this domestic setting, his presence in the novel maintains the tension between a highly "poetic" conception of Judaism and that practiced by the "vulgar" or "prosaic" Jew of London's East End. Mordecai represents Judaism as a "religion of the heart" while Cohen seems more closely associated with a lax view of Jewish religious practices, since he even conducts business on the Sabbath. It is this difference between Mordecai and Cohen which creates a "spiritual distance" between himself and the Cohen family.

³²Ibid., 443.

³³Ibid., 442.

³⁴Ibid., 636.

However, Mordecai's "poetic" qualities and his abandonment of material desires function not only to distinguish him from the "prosaic" Jews, but also to illustrate their inability to appreciate his spiritual insights. Ezra Cohen's young son, Jacob, is given the opportunity to learn Hebrew from the poet: "[Mordecai] would begin to repeat a Hebrew poem of his own, into which years before he had poured his first youthful ardours for that conception of a blended past and future...."³⁵ Mordecai's poetry is modeled on that of Jehuda-ha-Levi's work, and by teaching it to young Jacob, he attempts to establish a continuity between the past and present generations. Yet, Jacob neither understands nor appreciates Mordecai's poetry or the inheritance of Jewish culture being passed along to him. As Daniel observes Mordecai in the Hand and Banner, he too notices that this man, "more poetical than a social reformer with coloured views of the new moral world," is at odds with the Jews there as well.³⁶ None of the others agree with his argument for a Jewish polity. In fact, his words seem incomprehensible to them: Mordecai is "like a poet among people of a strange speech, who may have a poetry of their own, but have no ear for his cadence, no answering thrill to his discovery of latent virtues in his mother tongue."³⁷ His

³⁵Ibid., 533.

³⁶Ibid., 568.

³⁷Ibid., 588.

spiritual insights make him different from other Jews, but also generate admiration in Daniel who is intensely aware of his "poetic" nature. It is this nature that distinguishes Mordecai from the "prosaic" Cohens and other Jews at the Hand and Banner, making him the poet whose verse is in "a strange speech."

His very "spiritual distance" from other Jews also provides him with the insights to defend Judaism from its critics, and to envision a revival of the Jewish people in terms of a new polity. Mordecai refutes many of the arguments made by the Jewish members of the "Philosophers" during their meeting at the Hand and Banner. The discussion of the club's "Jewish night" allows Eliot to present the variety of perspectives held by Jews as to their future in post-emancipation society. Each member of the club who offers an opinion seems to take a position diametrically opposed to Mordecai's, so that he is prompted to outline his idea of a Jewish future. For example, Buchanan argues that he agrees "with the philosophers of the last century that Jews have played no great part as a people." Mordecai responds to this observation by pointing to Judaism's fundamental role in the development of religion:

But it is true, as Jehuda-ha-Levi first said, that Israel is the heart of mankind, if we mean by heart the core of affection which bonds a race and its families in dutiful love, and the reverence for the human body which lifts the needs of our animal life into religion....³⁸

³⁸Ibid., 590.

Israel has played a central role in the development of religious consciousness by establishing the sense of moral responsibility upon which the family and society rest. The emphasis here is on Israel's past and its ability to function as "the heart of mankind," so that other "races" could further this religious development to fit their own needs.

However, Mordecai stresses that Judaism will continue to contribute to the spiritual growth of humanity just as it did in ancient times. Lily takes issue with this perspective noting that while the Jews contributed to progress at one time, they are now "a stand still people" who display a "type of obstinate adherence to the superannuated," and are incapable "as a race" of "development."³⁹ Mordecai draws examples from Jewish history to refute Lily's claim that the Jews are "a stand still people." He describes their struggle as "a people who kept and enlarged their spiritual store at the very time when they were hunted with a hatred as fierce as the forest-fires."⁴⁰ Though the Jew "was bled of [his wealth and wisdom] to fill the bath of Gentile luxury," he continued the process of "enlarging and illuminating with fresh-fed interpretation" the store of religious knowledge.⁴¹ Mordecai credits the Jews' exceptional existence as a nation in which "religion and law and moral life mingled as the stream of

³⁹Ibid., 590.

⁴⁰Ibid., 590.

⁴¹Ibid., 591.

blood in the heart and made one growth" with providing the spiritual strength to sustain them in the past. It is also this national existence that he believes will help sustain them in the future.

Mordecai not only explains how Jews have functioned as the "heart" of religious knowledge for humanity, but he also describes how persecuted Jews in the nineteenth century cling to their limited conception of Judaism. While he attempts to defend nineteenth-century Jews, Mordecai also implies that they have faltered with regard to religious education, and are in need of a deeper understanding of their own religious practices. He criticizes those Gentiles who "scorn" the Jews' "ignorant observance" of their religious rituals, and attributes much of their "ignorance" to centuries of persecution. The very existence of the "multitudes of the ignorant" who practice their faith is proof that the "soul of Judaism is not dead," so that this "organic centre" may be revived once more.⁴² While the Jews must remain a separate people to ensure their own survival, Mordecai sees a religious revival as contributing to the general well-being:

I cherish nothing for the Jewish nation...but the good which promises good to all the nations. The spirit of religious life, which is one with our national life, is not hatred of aught but wrong.⁴³

"Separatism" but not exclusiveness is necessary for the Jews

⁴²Ibid., 592.

⁴³Ibid., 597.

to complete their "fulfillment of the religious trust." In this way, the advances made by the Jewish people in their own development and spiritual growth as a nation will contribute to the religious progress of humankind.

Mordecai's character performs several functions in the novel that attracts the attention of Jewish reviewers. His vision is neither clouded by materialism nor by the "ignorance" attributed to Jews who closely follow rabbinical teaching. In this way, his function as poet and prophet associates him with Judaism as a "religion of the heart" or the spirit. His many references to the Cabala, or Jewish mysticism, rather than to the Talmud with its rabbinical authority seem to further this association. He emphasizes Israel's central role in the development of religion, the Jewish people's faithfulness in the midst of persecution, and the continual growth in spiritual enlightenment that Judaism has made and will continue to make for both the Jewish and other peoples. Mordecai also refutes many of the criticisms of Judaism that continued throughout the nineteenth century as well as espouses his dream for the establishment of a separate polity which will ensure the survival of the Jewish people and their distinctiveness.

In fact, Mordecai's character so aptly embodies the richness of Jewish spiritual life that Jewish reviewers seem compelled to argue that he is an historical figure. References to Lewes's article on Spinoza, with its description

of Cohn, provide the most obvious evidence for the argument that Eliot's character is based on the life of a historical figure. Jacobs refers to Lewes's Cohn, noting "traces of a Jew who, allowing for the idealisation which is the privilege of the artist, might well stand for the prototype of Mordecai."⁴⁴ He concludes that Eliot has transformed this Cohn into the "prophet of the new exile." Similarly, The Jewish Chronicle uses the description of him "in order to show that--mere poetical conception and visionary creation of an author's brain, as he appears to be--the 'Mordecai' of George Eliot has had an actual living and breathing existence amongst us."⁴⁵ George Eliot has only altered the reality of this character's existence by adding a few "idealistic touches." Picciotto also emphasizes this dual existence of Mordecai and Daniel:

We cannot judge of Daniel Deronda and Mordecai from the matter-of-fact surroundings of prosaic every-day life--albeit neither of these two characters is so totally imaginary and so far removed from actual truth as has been asserted.⁴⁶

All of these reviewers recognize as did non-Jewish reviewers the highly idealized quality of the character, but they also repeatedly tried to show how this "idealism" simply "transforms" actual historical figures into fictional ones.

⁴⁴Jacobs, "Mordecai," 104.

⁴⁵Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 22 September 1876, p. 394.

⁴⁶Picciotto, "Deronda the Jew," 602.

Without bridging this gap between the "ideal" and the "real," Jewish reviewers could not have claimed the novel explores the true "inner spirit" of Judaism.

Eliot's extensive use of Jewish history in Daniel Deronda is also seen by the reviewers as proof that Mordecai's character is based on the life of an actual individual. Dr. Hermann Adler dismisses the critics' comments that Mordecai's existence is "improbable" by referring to George Eliot's "profound studies" in Jewish history. He suggests that Jewish history itself provides numerous examples of Jews who like Mordecai, maintained their faith in spite of hardships.⁴⁷ In addition, Jacobs criticizes non-Jewish reviewers who fail to recognize how "hereditary influences" contribute to the development of Mordecai's character. He sees Mordecai as embodying the "historic continuity of a national character" as well as exemplifying the operation of "racial influences" throughout history.⁴⁸

However, neither Jacobs nor Picciotto seem satisfied to consign the "existence" of Mordecai to history alone, but they believe that such a character may be found among nineteenth-century Jews, just like Lewes found Cohn. Jacobs suggests that the Victorian Jewish scholar, Emanuel Deutsch, might have easily been Eliot's model. His exemplary life provides

⁴⁷"The Rev. Dr. Hermann Adler on 'Daniel Deronda,'" 586.

⁴⁸Jacobs, "Mordecai," 104.

evidence for "the possibility of a Jew like Mordecai."⁴⁹ If not for his untimely death, Deutsch could have "convince[d] the world in his own burning words that Mordecai is no inert scarecrow of abstractions, but a warm living reality!"⁵⁰ Picciotto goes a step further arguing that a Jew like Mordecai may yet be found among the poor:

Who shall say that among the immigrants from distant climes or among the Jews of Great Britain there is no workman whose whole heart is wrapped up in visions of the future greatness of his race?⁵¹

It is the very nature of Judaism itself that allows both the scholar and the workman to equally contribute to its spiritual development. As discussed in the chapter on Arnold, Victorian Jews characterize the dogma, and rigid institutional hierarchy as limiting the future evolution of Christianity. Jacobs alludes to the progressive and egalitarian Jewish spirit when he explains that "in Judaism the inner development of the Spirit has been carried on entirely by laymen."⁵²

Yet, this egalitarian ideal is but one aspect of Judaism that fosters the development of historical figures who could serve as models for Mordecai, and help reveal the spiritual nature of Judaism. Jewish critics use Eliot's portrayal of Mordecai as poet, prophet, and scholar to highlight the rich

⁴⁹Ibid., 105.

⁵⁰Ibid., 105.

⁵¹Picciotto, "Deronda the Jew," 601.

⁵²Jacobs, "Mordecai," 104.

"inner life of Judaism." A general consensus among these critics is that Mordecai is "a poetical conception of the very first order."⁵³ The Jewish Chronicle sees this "poetical" quality as a product of Jewish spirituality itself:

while in the lowly and poetical Mordecai we have the ideal of the highest Jewish associations, the noblest outcome of that lofty teaching, those exalted principles which spring from the deepest root of Judaism....⁵⁴

The "lofty teaching" of Judaism is capable of inspiring the most profound spiritual insights, and Mordecai's "poetical" qualities are the embodiment of this "ideal." Jacobs takes a more adversarial position on this issue by arguing that both Daniel Deronda and his review of the novel "[strike] another blow to convince the English world of the existence in the present day and for all time past of a spiritual life in Judaism."⁵⁵ The novel presents a "new idea...embodied in the person of Mordecai Cohen" which emphasizes "the inner life of Judaism." By using Mordecai to reveal this "inner life" to the public, George Eliot has exposed "unconscious Judaeophobia," and questioned the intellectual assumption "that modern Judaism is a lifeless code of ritual instead of a living body of religious truth."⁵⁶ Mordecai is at once the

⁵³Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 8 September 1876, p. 357.

⁵⁴Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 15 December 1876, p. 585.

⁵⁵Jacobs, "Mordecai," 103.

⁵⁶Ibid., 107.

product of Jewish teaching as well as the proof that Judaism is not a "fossilized" moral code.

According to the critics, his "poetic" nature also makes him an important force in the struggle for Jewish survival. As in the past, Jewish poets mourned the "national tragedy" of Jewish exile and looked to the future of Judaism. Jacob sees this struggle for survival as a battle for "spiritual Judaism" as well as for freedom from physical persecution:

Mordecai Cohen is a lineal successor of those great leaders of spiritual Judaism who have fought...that moral warfare which Judaism has waged and won against the whole world...a noble representative of that spirit of resistance that has repulsed...disintegrating forces ever brought against a nation or a creed.⁵⁷

Mordecai's character illustrates "a bolder application of the historic continuity of the Hebraic spirit" that comes to fruition in the "'survival' of the prophet spirit."⁵⁸ It is this "prophetic spirit" that will continue to repel the "disintegrating forces" of conversion and "absorption." According to Picciotto, "the poetry of Mordecai will prove caviare to the multitude" by animating their vision of the "mission of Israel."⁵⁹ The poet Mordecai embodies the "spirit of resistance" that will preserve Jewish continuity, and reinvigorate the Jewish "mission" in the nineteenth century. As Eliot comments in a letter to Mrs. Henry

⁵⁷Ibid., 104.

⁵⁸Ibid., 103.

⁵⁹Picciotto, "Deronda the Jew," 601.

Frederick Ponsonby written during February of 1875: "And how can the life of nations be understood without the inward light of poetry--that is, of emotion blending with thought?"⁶⁰ Mordecai is both the heir of the historical Jewish poets as well as the Victorian visionary who reveals the "inward light" of his nation's poetry.

While Mordecai's poetry reveals the "inner life of Judaism" to the reader, his relationship with Daniel Deronda works to free Judaism from the stigma of being a "ghetto" religion. Mordecai himself is described as a "ghetto" Jew with his "emaciated figure" and "a cloth cap with black fur round it." The narrator comments that those witnessing his visits to the National Gallery most likely "[thought] of him as an odd-looking Jew, who probably got money out of pictures," but would never guess that he sought the image of a new Jewish leader. Mordecai is aware of the impression his appearance must make, and he is "morbidly alive to the effect of a man's poverty and other physical disadvantages in cheapening his ideas."⁶¹ He envisions "some soul kindred enough to accept the spiritual product of his own brief painful life, as a mission to be executed," but who also will significantly differ from him in appearance, social position, and intellectual training. In fact, Mordecai's successor must be freed from all those signs which would associate him with

⁶⁰Eliot, Letters, 6:124.

⁶¹Eliot, Daniel Deronda, 529.

the ghetto:

he imagined a man who would have all the elements necessary for sympathy with him, but in an embodiment unlike his own: he must be a Jew, intellectually cultured, morally fervid...his face and frame must be beautiful and strong...his circumstances be free from sordid need: he must glorify the possibilities of the Jew, not sit and wander as Mordecai did, bearing the stamp of his people amid signs of poverty and waning breath.⁶²

Although Deronda will later reproach his mother for having denied him the knowledge of his Jewish heritage, it is only because he grew up free from the oppressiveness of the "ghetto" that he fulfills Mordecai's vision of the new Jewish leader. The novel implies that if Deronda had been aware of his background, he too would have suffered from the "deforming" or "disfiguring" influences of the "ghetto." Deronda is not only an English gentleman, but as a literary figure he is freed from the stereotype of "vulgar Jew." While Meyer sees Eliot's novel as idealizing the "refined Jew," Victorian Jewish reviewers see it as removing this stigma of the "ghetto."

However, Deronda's interest in Judaism takes shape when he begins his exploration of London's Jewish sections long before he learns of his own Jewish heritage. His affection for Mirah and his search for her family initially prompt Daniel's interest, but it is Mordecai's intense spirituality as the "prophet in exile" that seems to encourage Daniel's intellectual pursuits. His Jewish studies begin with his

⁶²Ibid., 529.

purchase of Salomon Maimon's Lebensgeschichte from Mordecai at their first meeting. Later, the narrator notes that "Deronda found himself after one o'clock in the morning in rather the ludicrous position of sitting up severely holding a Hebrew grammar in his hands (for somehow, in deference to Mordecai, he had begun to study Hebrew)." ⁶³ As the novel progresses, Deronda becomes increasingly aware not only of Mordecai's "greatness" as a "spiritual exile" but of his influence as well:

in the poise of his sentiments he felt at one with this man who had made a visionary selection of him: the lines of what may be called their emotional theory touched. He had not the Jewish consciousness, but he had a yearning...after the obligation of avowed filial and social ties. ⁶⁴

Deronda continues his study of Hebrew even after he reunites Mirah with her brother, and his obligation to her is fulfilled.

The relationship between Deronda and Mordecai develops while the reader knows the former only as an "English gentleman." By describing Deronda reading Leopold Zunz, and studying Hebrew, Eliot indicates that these activities are worthy of notice by the social and intellectual elite of England. This also further highlights the inability of the "vulgar" Cohen Jews, the ghetto Jews, to truly appreciate the profundity of their own religion. The most intense study of

⁶³Ibid., 466.

⁶⁴Ibid., 605-6.

Judaism is left to the "cultured" and "intellectual" Jews. This duty seems to pass from the hands of the "ghetto" Jews to Deronda, just as the care of Mordecai shifts from the Cohens to him.

Daniel's pursuit of Jewish scholarship and his acceptance of his own Jewish background function as an illustration of Judaism's compatibility with upper-class English life and work to dissociate it from the stigma of the "ghetto" because of his social standing in Gentile society. Mordecai's desire for a new Jewish leader freed from the stigma of the "ghetto" parallels that of many Victorian Jews who see both the novel and the community working towards this end. Consequently, The Jewish Chronicle makes a point of praising the novel for dissociating the Jew from the "ghetto":

It is the Jew dwelling in safety, freed from the ghetto, come into contact with modern civilisation and culture...whose character is powerfully affected by it, and exhibiting the incisive effects produced thereby in his life, sentiments and spiritual being.⁶⁵

By bringing the Jew into contact "with modern civilisation and culture," he or she is able to develop a full intellectual and spiritual life. The novel affirms both Jewishness and Judaism as capable of fulfilling or inspiring the "cultured" individual such as Deronda, so that as the Jew assumes a role in post-emancipation society, his religion need not be abandoned.

⁶⁵Review of Daniel Deronda, by Daniel Deronda, The Jewish Chronicle, 15 December 1876, p. 585.

Though English Jews were never confined to an actual "ghetto," there were social and psychological restrictions placed on them that were seen as preventing the development of their individual potential:

True, the Jews were not confined in a material Ghetto. But their pursuits were so restricted, that scope of their lives was so cramped, that trading, speculating...necessarily became the principal occupations of their existence.⁶⁶

The "ghetto" limits the "scope of their lives" so that Jews themselves felt that they did not benefit from the advantages of "culture" and civilization. Their interests were perceived as being limited to "trading" and "speculating" or material pursuits. By the latter part of the century, Jewish leaders actively discouraged immigrants from becoming moneylenders, an occupation considered to carry the stigma of the "ghetto" and to be damaging to the community's reputation. These limited interests of the Jews were also attributed to Judaism, so that it was considered a "ghetto" religion pre-occupied with dietary laws, and religious conservatism that emphasized ritual practice rather than evangelical ideal of spirituality. Feldman explains the interconnection between "manners" and Judaism's reputation as a "ghetto religion":

Manners...were seen to carry the freight of ghetto tradition and emancipated modernity. These connections followed from the association of traditional Judaism with a system of ritual and rabbinism which not only made it appear incongruous but which also stunted the development

⁶⁶Picciotto, Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History, 386.

of a vital and personal religion.⁶⁷

Religious reform was partly aimed at altering this association so that the Jew could be perceived as "cultured" and his religion as enhancing his "spiritual being."

In fact, Isidore Spielmann's address given in 1892 to a group of Jewish school children celebrates the success of the community in "modernizing" Jewish life and removing the stigma of the "ghetto." This process of "modernization" was focussed on bringing Judaism in line with "English" tastes, so that the upcoming generation would not see Judaism as an encumbrance:

Now you, my friends, as young Englishmen and Englishwomen of the Jewish faith, have the great advantage of receiving your religious training from an Englishman of the Jewish ministry, and the advantage is, that your teacher whilst holding steadfastly to the principles of our religion cannot possibly shut his eyes to the fact that we are English Jews, living in England of the 19th century....English Jews of the present generation who have been born and reared in absolute freedom do not require and cannot thrive on Ghetto-Judaism.⁶⁸

According to Spielmann, Judaism is no longer a "kitchen religion," but through the efforts of Anglo-Jewish ministry is a "spiritual religion." Deronda's reply to Kalonymous, the friend of his father, seems to anticipate this transformation:

I shall call myself a Jew....But I will not say that I shall profess to believe exactly as my fathers have believed. Our fathers themselves changed the horizon of their belief and learned of other races. But I think I can maintain my grandfather's notion of separateness and communication. I hold that my first duty is to my own

⁶⁷Feldman, 65.

⁶⁸"Mr. Isidore Spielmann on Religious Progress and Reform," The Jewish Chronicle, 29 January 1892, p. 10.

people....⁶⁹

As a member of the younger generation of Jews, Deronda will recognize his Jewish origins, but his religious beliefs will be tempered by insights "learned of other races." These comments seem to apply to the Jewish community in general, that holds "steadfastly to the principles of our religion" which are informed to some degree by English social practices.

Daniel Deronda's character also receives critical attention from Jewish reviewers because of his unhesitating embrace of his Jewish background. Non-Jewish reviewers question Deronda's immediate acceptance of his Jewishness and his abandonment of Christianity with what seems like a very limited amount of soul searching. Just as they see Mordecai as an unrealistic characterization of the Jew, they consider this rapid development of Deronda's character to be a serious aesthetic flaw, further damaging the novel's credibility. In contrast, Jewish reviewers insist on the "naturalness" of Deronda's transition from Christian to Jew in order to show that it is neither an anomaly nor an aesthetic flaw in the novel. The larger issue underlying this debate rests on the assumption that a member of the social elite would rather hide or disclaim any ties to Judaism. Picciotto observes that Deronda "enthusiastically accepts the mission bequeathed to him by Mordecai, however incongruous it may appear to an

⁶⁹Eliot, Daniel Deronda, 792.

individual brought up in fashionable circles."⁷⁰

Moreover, Jewish reviewers such as Jacobs attempt to explain why non-Jews fail to understand the "naturalness" of Deronda's transition. He recognizes "the jar most readers have felt in the omission of any explanation of the easy transition of Deronda from the Christianity in which he was bred to the Judaism in which he had been born."⁷¹ Jacobs further explains that this acceptance is easily understood by a Jew, and points to the "affinity of nature" as the driving force behind Deronda's interest in Judaism. The Jewish Chronicle also shares this perspective with Jacobs:

In delineating the character of 'Daniel Deronda'...it seems to have been the purpose of the authoress to lay stress upon one particular phase of Judaism--that its professors are not bound together only by the tie of a common religion, but they have another link...of race, of common descent. It is this affinity of nature, of deep national kinship which attracts Daniel so powerfully to the poor consumptive Mordecai.⁷²

Jacob parallels Eliot in emphasizing the "affinity of nature" or racial ties as an intuitive connection that draws Deronda to Judaism even before he is aware that his parents were Jews.

Not all Jewish reviewers were satisfied to attribute Deronda's conversion to race alone, but they also attribute this change to Mordecai's influence. Picciotto lists the forceful influence of Mordecai's personality, the ties of

⁷⁰Picciotto, "Deronda the Jew," 596.

⁷¹Jacobs, "Mordecai," 101.

⁷²"The Rev. Dr. Hermann Adler on 'Daniel Deronda,'" 586.

race, and the tendencies of individual character as moderating Deronda's conversion. He openly acknowledges that Deronda would be confronted with social disadvantages by observing that "how far a young man of good social position is likely to break with his former ties to embrace ancient religious forms" which are likely to result in "ridicule" is "determined by the amount of sacrifice each person is disposed to make on behalf of his convictions."⁷³ He adds that "there is nothing inherently improbable" about Daniel returning to this creed "especially in the case...of a race who cling obstinately to their traditions," and that Deronda's "impulses" are enhanced "by the contagious enthusiasm of a poetical dreamer, and by the love of a tender, bright pure face." The Jewish Chronicle also accounts for Deronda's unquestioning acceptance of his background as the result of the dual influence of a growing affection for Mirah, and Mordecai's engrossing philosophy: "Conversations with Mordecai arouse in Deronda's breast a deep and enthralling interest in Jews and Judaism; and philosophy completes that which love had begun."⁷⁴ The "natural" development of emotional ties into intellectual pursuits, and the "affinity" of races are all explanations that emphasize the probability of Deronda's actions so that his acceptance of Judaism gains credibility.

⁷³Picciotto, "Deronda the Jew," 596.

⁷⁴Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 22 September 1876, p. 394.

As in the criticism of Mordecai's character, Picciotto offers examples of historical figures who had experiences similar to Deronda's. He blurs the distinction between fiction and biography so that Deronda's experience becomes associated with historical reality. He makes an argument for the plausibility of Deronda's return to Judaism by alluding to the case of Albert Goldsmid:⁷⁵

In recent years, the well-known case has occurred in the Jewish community of an officer in the army, the grandson of an Israelite, albeit himself born a Christian, who returned spontaneously to the religion of his ancestors.⁷⁶

He assures the reader that "no worldly circumstances to influence his conduct were visible." Furthermore, Goldsmid did not gain any social advantages since his return to Judaism "could not have rendered his regimental position more agreeable." This argument is used to suggest that Daniel Deronda is not merely an account of an idealized Jewish life, but in fact, mirrors actual Jewish experience lending further support for the intense devotion that Judaism can elicit from its followers. Picciotto admits that "Daniel Deronda...may never live, but Jews have arisen...who, if not resembling him in his perfections, will at least equal him in love of race

⁷⁵Colonel Albert E. W. Goldsmid (1846-1904) was raised as a Christian, and later embraces his Jewish background in 1870. Lipman explains that he not only became an observant Jew, but "he adopted a passionate, even romantic, Jewish nationalism." On one occasion, Goldsmid alludes to Eliot's novel by proclaiming, "I am Daniel Deronda." Lipman, 120-1.

⁷⁶Picciotto, "Deronda the Jew," 596.

and in ardor for the national cause."⁷⁷ While this article appeared in The Gentleman's Magazine, it seems to be written for the benefit of Jews who might abandon Judaism or hide their Jewishness for social advantage, as well as to illustrate to Christians "the intense devotion" of Jews to their religion, so that Picciotto uses Daniel Deronda to provide an example of admirable Jewish behavior.

Even though Deronda seems to represent the ideal embodiment of the "cultured" and intellectual Jew, he is not considered a role model for Jewish behavior. Mordecai is used to exemplify the kind of behavior that should be emulated by the working-class Jew. His highly idealized character seems to contribute to his importance as a role model for the "modern Jew":

True no modern Jew would be likely to use similar language, but Mordecai is an abstraction of all higher aspirations and sublime thoughts of the Hebrew sages and poets. He is a noble type of what the modern Jew should be, rather than what he is.⁷⁸

His "sublime thoughts" and "higher aspirations" indicate how he values spirituality rather than materialism, so that he comes to embody the ideals found "lacking" in Victorian Jews. In his address to a working man's association, Hermann Adler stresses not only Mordecai's pride in his religion and work, but also his pursuit of "self culture":

⁷⁷Ibid., 597.

⁷⁸Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 8 September 1876, p. 357.

Dr. Adler said his hearers had reason to be proud that one of their order, a Jewish working man, suggested some of the finest ideas...in a work which will live as long as the English language shall endure, and he hoped that his lecture of that evening would induce them to imitate the example of [Mordecai]...to be proud of their religion, proud of the work which gained them their daily bread, and to devote that institution [Working Man's Club] to those intellectual pursuits, to that self-culture which should constitute one of the highest aspirations of man, which has ever been one of proudest badges of a Hebrew's honour.⁷⁹

The Rabbi highlights the ways that Mordecai works to reinforce communal values such as dutiful pride in one's work and religion. Yet, his emphasis on "intellectual pursuits" and "self-culture" indicate the community's desire to widen the workingman's vision, which in turn, links Judaism with religious progress rather than "ghetto" conservatism.

Other characters besides Mordecai are used to illustrate communal values that need to be preserved or to illustrate the dangers confronting the individual and the community when they are abandoned. For example, Jewish reviewers of Eliot's novel consider the role of women in the community when contrasting the fates of Princess Halm-Eberstein and Mirah. This discussion of the behavior of the Princess and Mirah takes place in the context of a growing concern for the spiritual well-being of Jewish women. In "Faith and Its Influence on Women," The Jewish Chronicle acknowledges the skepticism of the nineteenth century, while observing that "possibly there is no feature of the age more dangerous or distressing than

⁷⁹"The Rev. Dr. Hermann Adler on 'Daniel Deronda,'" 586.

the growing irreligion of women."⁸⁰ The paper attributes this alteration in the piety of Jewish women to both their employment outside the home, and their increased access to education: the "'home' has ceased to be the sole stage on which they shine," since "they now seek to gain the glitter of the 'world.'" In order to counteract these influences more attention must be given to the religious education of women, so that they can convey their sense of piety to their children and insure the perpetuation of the Jewish religion.

Picciotto uses Deronda's mother to illustrate how women who fail to fulfill their religious duties in favor of pursuing their careers may cause their children to neglect, if not abandon, Judaism. Although Mordecai's influence on Deronda has helped him to appreciate Judaism, his mother has both hidden his Jewish background from him, and allowed her son to be brought up as a Christian gentleman largely because of "worldly considerations." Picciotto notes that "she denounces that faith as too narrow, formal, and rigid; as a creed which places woman in an inferior position and limits her sphere to domestic duties."⁸¹ However, he also gives the reader ample reasons to distrust this character's assessment of Judaism by describing her as "a bold ambitious woman" who avoids "the trammels of religions, just as she

⁸⁰"Faith and Its Influence on Women," The Jewish Chronicle, 12 March 1875, p. 801.

⁸¹Picciotto, "Deronda the Jew," 598.

despises family ties." The Princess Halm-Eberstein exhibits the "musical genius undoubtedly possessed by the Hebrew race," but she also has "a strong masculine mind" that seems to drive her pursuit of "the glitter of the 'world.'" Her ambition has defeminized her so that both she and her criticism of Judaism are presented to the reader as anomalies in Picciotto's review. Since she is no longer a "woman" but a "musical genius" with a "masculine mind," it is not possible for her to convey the religious principles that a mother must instill in her child.

In fact, the display of true femininity and the fulfillment of parental duties are repeatedly linked to the perpetuation of religious faith. The Jewish Chronicle also describes the Princess as a "woman of masculine mind," but adds that she has "revolted against Judaism, because it assigns a woman's natural duties to woman."⁸² This "unnatural mother" typifies Jewish parents whose children eventually abandon Judaism. Their behavior helps perpetuate prejudice, and contributes to the "disfigurement" of the Jewish child's character:

In Deronda's mother we have the type of...Jews who despair of the future because borne down not by legal persecution...but by social ostracism...[and] by that prejudice which is the inheritance of past ages...feeding upon those peculiarities...by which the bigotry of the past has warped the Jewish character; and which like the

⁸²Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 22 September 1876, p. 394.

scars of wounds continue to disfigure it....⁸³

While the prejudices of English society may initially hamper the attachment to Judaism, it is the parents "with convictions not sufficiently strong...to transplant them to the souls of their children" who prevent strong attachments to the Jewish faith to "take root in their hearts" and foster their children's "estrangement" from Judaism.⁸⁴ This violation of religious duty and this "unnatural " feminine quality of the Princess results in "the woman's self-torture and haunting remorse" because she "separated her son from herself and his religion."⁸⁵ Her fate serves as a potent example of the "remorse" that Jewish parents who fail to instill some attachment to Judaism in their children may eventually confront.

In contrast, the reviewers use Mirah's character to illustrate several important communal values. Mirah's mother instills a deep sense of religious devotion in her daughter, even without the advantages of formal education. According to Picciotto, Mirah exemplifies a "deep heroism" that is characterized by her attachment to her faith and family: "Mirah is a typical daughter of Israel, simple and childlike, unambitious...and above all profoundly attached to her family

⁸³Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 15 December 1876, p. 585.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 22 September 1876, p. 394.

and race."⁸⁶ Unlike the Princess, Mirah's ties to her religious ideals and to the memory of her mother and brother prevent her from being tempted by "the glitter of the 'world.'" She refuses to become slave to her musical talents, and rejects a seemingly illicit relationship with the Count that her father arranges. Her ties to faith and family also prevent her from being tempted by the romantic advances of Hans Meyrick whose family secretly desires her conversion to Christianity. Her "purity" is maintained by her religious convictions that protect her from materialism, sexual improprieties, and conversion. At the same time, her actions work to maintain the continuity of the Jewish community, since she avoids intermarriage and embraces her role as a Jewish woman. A reciprocal relationship is developed here between the individual and the community. Ties to Judaism act to protect the individual from spiritual isolation and immorality, while the individual who adheres to Judaism helps maintain the continuity of the community by avoiding conversion, intermarriage, and religious skepticism.

The reviewers also use Jewish men to illustrate the importance of communal ties for the well-being of the individual. Lapidoth, Mirah's degenerate father, is used to exemplify the dangers faced by the individual who steps outside any communal control. (Even the Princess cannot free herself from some sense of emotional obligation to the

⁸⁶Picciotto, "Deronda the Jew," 599.

community so she finally informs Deronda about his Jewish heritage.) Lapidoth abandons his wife, but takes his daughter with him so that he can profit from her musical talents, and eventually, from her liaison with the Count. He makes no effort to provide for either her physical or spiritual well-being, and takes her from theater to theater in order to earn a living. Jacobs characterizes Lapidoth as "the Jew with no redeeming love for family, race, or country to preserve him from sordid egoism."⁸⁷ The Jewish Chronicle sees Lapidoth's "reckless levity" as illustrating the dangers confronting the soul "when it has once quitted the safe moorings of the ancestral faith, has wantonly severed all communal ties...that might act as a break upon unbridled appetites...[so] drifts until sucked down by the whirlpool of the most degrading passions."⁸⁸ By abandoning his ties to the Jewish community and Judaism, Lapidoth also loses the "safety" of these controlling forces, and drifts into a moral wasteland of sorts. His story provides a didactic lesson to the reader about the dangers of neglecting "the ancestral faith" which acts to center the individual. These ties function as a way to control "unbridled appetites" of the individual, just as they also help perpetuate Judaism. Like Mirah's story, Lapidoth's also helps to illustrate the reciprocal

⁸⁷Jacobs, "Mordecai," 102.

⁸⁸Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 15 December 1876, p. 585.

relationship between the community and the individual.

Ezra Cohen functions as Lapidoth's counterpart by illustrating the comforts of Jewish home life. While Picciotto does not consider the profession of pawnbroker "ennobling," he does believe that Cohen is the "real embodiment of the qualities, good and indifferent, that make up the Jewish tradesman." Cohen is also "an excellent father and husband and a strict follower of the practices of his faith" which seems to mitigate his pursuit of "gain."⁸⁹ The Jewish Chronicle also makes it clear that religiosity and domesticity act as an antidote to vulgarity and materialism. The paper praises Eliot for her description of the Cohens' "practice of those virtues of charity and religious observance...in palliation of their coarseness and over-keen desire for money getting."⁹⁰ In fact, most reviewers consider Cohen's business transaction on the Sabbath to be an "error" on Eliot's part, rather than an allusion to Cohen's "desire for money getting." The difference between Cohen and Lapidoth resides in the former's ties to his family and religion. Both characters are equally portrayed as exhibiting an "over-keen desire for money getting," but Cohen's materialism is qualified by his concern for his family. As "an excellent father...and strict follower of his faith," he

⁸⁹Picciotto, "Deronda the Jew," 600.

⁹⁰Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 8 September 1876, p. 357.

works to maintain the stability of the community, while at the same time, these ties prevent him from being consumed by materialism.

While much of Daniel Deronda has been considered by Jewish reviewers to affirm communal values, it also functions to pose a number of questions about the future of Judaism. The reviewers are prompted to speculate on the path that Judaism must take in order to adapt to modern life. It seems to be an unquestioned assumption that certain ritual practices must be modified to harmonize with Victorian ideas of religious observance. In his review Picciotto appeals to the fictional character of Deronda to initiate such changes:

"To bind our race together in spite of heresy," is one of the aspirations that must be felt by every Israelite whilst admitting the difficulty of the solution. To bring Judaism...into consonance with modern ideas, is a task which only Daniel Deronda can effect.⁹¹

This process of "modernization" involves balancing the "Jewish traditions" with the attractions of Victorian culture and intellectual activities. Reformers must work "to maintain intact the spirit of Judaism, to preserve in pristine purity the faith and traditions of Israel, without keeping up the inflexible rigidity which opposes every improvement, and which drove out of the community an Isaac Disraeli."⁹² His comments here highlight the dilemma that confronts the reformers throughout the century; they must "preserve" the

⁹¹Picciotto, "Deronda the Jew," 602.

⁹²Ibid.

"traditions of Israel" to retain a sense of Jewishness and continuity with the past, but in doing so, they also must make reforms that will be attractive to Jews. The enthusiasm for reform, like that for Daniel Deronda, has at its source the desire for Judaism to seem acceptable to both Jews and non-Jews.

In "Modern Judaism" (1875), the writer points out the importance of reform in making Judaism attractive to younger members of the community. He observes "that modern Jews look upon their creed as in some degree elastic" so that they value the idea of reform as a response to the "existing circumstances" of the age.⁹³ Those who fail to recognize "that Judaism as practiced by the orthodox is too restrictive for the present age" fail also to recognize the impending dangers facing the community. In this instance, it is not Christianity nor oppression that threatens attrition from the Jewish community but "materialism":

Christians--good Christians--Jews will never become; but unless a mighty effort is exerted to some salutary--yet not too subversive--reform, the rising generation will come to look with sympathising eyes on what is popularly known as materialism, or lapse into a state which may justify the application to them of the term 'nothingarians.'⁹⁴

Endelman has noted that while some Jews may have become lax in religious observance, they still maintained ties to the

⁹³"Modern Judaism, by an English Jew," The Gentleman's Magazine 239 (October 1875): 438-9.

⁹⁴Ibid., 439.

community by participating in various Jewish organizations.

However, the author of "Modern Judaism" argues that "the rising generations of Jews, many of whom are now bound together by racial ties" will inevitably drift away from the community if steps towards "modernization" are not taken. He believes that "the loosening of these ties--and the progress of education must inevitably affect the racial feeling" and that such changes will necessitate "a reformation in Judaic practices for the sake of concord."⁹⁵ Neither religious conviction nor racial ties will adequately be able to prevent attrition from the community if reforms are not instituted. The Jewish Chronicle also identifies the job of "modern Judaism" as "rendering itself acceptable to the youths of the rising generations," who have been exposed to an increasingly secular society.⁹⁶

Mordecai's ideas are perceived as offering solutions to the problems confronting the future of Judaism. Joseph Jacobs argues that Mordecai's vision of the "resumption of the holy land" by Jews is the only possible hope for Jewish survival. He credits the Victorian era as being one of those "periods of prosperity" that are "the most perilous for our national life: it is the struggle for national existence that has resulted...in the survival of the fittest missionaries of the

⁹⁵Ibid., 443.

⁹⁶"'Modern Judaism,'" The Jewish Chronicle, 8 October 1875, p. 452.

true religion."⁹⁷ It is his concern that "unless some such project as Mordecai has in view be carried out...it is much to be feared that both the national life of Jews and the religious life of Judaism will perish utterly from the face of the earth."⁹⁸ Both "history" and "reason" bear out his claim that unless some immediate action is taken Israel's "glorious past will sink into antiquarian study instead of living as a perennial spring of politic action."⁹⁹ Jacobs's comments indicate the feeling of immediacy that was tied to the issues of reform and national survival, because of the encroaching materialism of the age, and the growth of religious apathy. It is Mordecai's urgent pleas for restoration of the Holy Land that seem to provide a way to rekindle the desire for "political action" in the community.

For those who have more moderate views on Jewish survival in post-emancipation society, Mordecai's recognition of Jewish spirituality is used as proof of the future development of Jewish religious life. The Jewish Chronicle uses Mordecai as evidence that the spirituality of Judaism will not be altered by reform:

Mordecai has completely seized the lofty spiritual character of his religion and the great future in store for it, and he knows that purification of Judaism does not mean throwing off of all its distinctive rites and observances as some false pretenders to enlightenment

⁹⁷Jacobs, "Mordecai," 110.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid., 108.

would have it.¹⁰⁰

While Eliot does assign "a great future" to Judaism, it seems unclear as to exactly what this process of "purification" may mean to Mordecai. The Jewish Chronicle is undoubtedly referring to the need to abandon certain aspects of rabbinical authority, but uses Mordecai to exemplify how this "purification" will not compromise Jewish distinctiveness.

Mordecai's vision of "the great future" in store for Judaism is used as an argument for its ability to contribute to religious progress. In fact, The Jewish Chronicle suggests that one of the primary functions of the novel is to illustrate Judaism's role in the development of civilization:

George Eliot has certainly shown the most attractive side of the Jewish character...has striven to the utmost to show the world that the religion which has been the first cause of civilization and progress ennobles rather than deteriorates, its professors.¹⁰¹

This idea is further developed in Jacobs's analysis of Mordecai's vision of religious history:

Mordecai's is the profounder philosophy of history when he further thinks that the great quarry of religious truth, whence two world religions have been hewn...[and] has yet wherewithal to completely fashion the religion of the future.¹⁰²

Judaism has not only helped to shape the development of Christianity and Islam in the past, but it will continue to

¹⁰⁰"The Rev. Dr. Hermann Adler on 'Daniel Deronda,'" 586.

¹⁰¹Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 8 September 1876, p. 357.

¹⁰²Jacobs, "Mordecai," 108.

exercise its influence over religion in the future. This influence will increase partly because "the divorce between man and the world, which is the disintegrating factor in Christianity, nowhere finds a place in Judaism."¹⁰³ Daniel Deronda also prompts some discussion of the Jewish mission in the nineteenth century. As Jacobs observes, "Jews are a missionary though not a proselytizing people" whose religious developments are still unfolding.

In fact, Isidore Spielmann's assessment of the religious development of the community indicates that this sort of "progress" is taking shape with specifically English attributes. He draws attention to the numerous modifications made in Jewish religious practices in England as a great credit to religious progress which "Anglo-Jewish history of the future" will record as "a revival of genuine religious fervour." This "revival" of "religious fervour" has touched all levels of the community:

Indications of such a flowing in the tide of faith may now be seen on all sides: in the establishment of short and attractive services for women, in the establishment of special services for our foreign co-religionists, and in bright and cheerful Sabbath Afternoon services for children.¹⁰⁴

Its success may be attributed to the English-Jewish influence over the tide of incoming "foreign Jews":

Nevertheless our duty is to induce our foreign coreligionists to conform to the influences of modern

¹⁰³Ibid., 108.

¹⁰⁴"Mr. Isidore Spielmann on Religious Progress," 10.

civilization, to our customs, institutions, and authorities. In England, the English element must govern the foreign, not vice versa.¹⁰⁵

Spielmann indicates that Anglo-Jews are self-consciously shaping their religious institutions and practices to coincide with the social and cultural conventions of nineteenth-century England.

Daniel Deronda has played an important role in the Jewish community's efforts to establish the spirituality of Judaism. Jewish reviewers not only evaluate the novel, but they also attempt to demonstrate how the Jewish religion is consonant with English cultural and social values. In fact, an important component of these reviews is the ongoing debate over the need for religious reforms as Jews become more integrated into post-emancipation society. The novel is also used to illustrate positive communal values that were thought to be necessary for the stability and religious continuity of the Jewish community in England. Finally, Mordecai's vision of the restoration of Israel prompts the consideration of both the immediate spiritual needs of the Victorian Jews as well as the relationship between the future of Judaism and the establishment of a Jewish state. The next chapter will consider the implications of this Zionist vision for a Jewish community that has been preoccupied with demonstrating its ties to England.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

CHAPTER XI

"A FRESH MADE GARMENT OF CITIZENSHIP":

DANIEL DERONDA AND ANGLO-JEWISH IDENTITY

Appearing a year before the publication of George Eliot's Daniel Deronda, Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History by James Picciotto is one of the earliest historical studies of the Jewish community in England, and an indication of the growing self-awareness of Anglo-Jewry's distinctive identity and history. In his attempt to outline the emergence of the Anglo-Jewish community, Picciotto traces the history of the Jews in England from the time of their expulsion and readmittance to the second half of the nineteenth century. He describes the establishment of synagogues, disputes over religious worship, and the development of communal institutions such as the Jewish Board of Guardians. In addition, he traces the history of a number of well-known Jewish families including that of Isaac Disraeli, Nathan Meyer Rothschild, and Moses Montefiore. The Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History culminates in a description of the successful struggle for Jewish emancipation, and pays tribute to the social and political "progress" that has fostered this treatment of the Jews:

Happily in our day a Jew is scarcely subject to any

practical disqualifications. Jews have been considered worthy of filling positions of trust. The highest legal offices...are within the reach of Jews....Several constituencies have returned Jewish representatives. Social prejudices have disappeared and are disappearing; and the Jew, like the member of any other sect, may fill such place as he won by his industry and talents.¹

This "onward march of progress" has so altered the position of the Jewish community by removing political and social disabilities that "there is little for the Anglo-Jewish historian of the second half of the nineteenth century to chronicle, beyond a steady increase on the part of his co-religionists in number, in wealth, in intelligence, in material prosperity, and in moral influence."² The Anglo-Jewish historian can now shift his or her focus from the "persecution" of Jews to their full participation in society as English citizens.

Picciotto's preface indicates that he is particularly concerned with providing a historical narrative of the Anglo-Jewish community that will further its identification with England. He acknowledges his motivation for producing this historical study was prompted by the fact "that few enlightened and wealthy communities know so little of their own early history, as the Jews of Great Britain."³ This ignorance itself hampers the identification of the Jews with the English since they have only a limited knowledge of their

¹Picciotto, Sketches, 399-400.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., v.

shared experiences. While Picciotto constructs his history to illustrate this point for his Jewish readers, he also envisions his work as influencing Christian attitudes as well:

But though [it was] written by a Jew for Jews, the author trusts that Christians, whose faith was founded by members of the Jewish race, will find...much that may be of interest also to them. He hopes that as Christians learn to know better, they will also learn to like and appreciate better, Englishmen of the Jewish faith...and that the former may look with a less prejudiced eye on the foibles of the latter. He trusts that Christians may respect and esteem the many good qualities which their Jewish fellow-country men possess, sympathise with them in their struggles to elevate themselves, and heartily stretch forth to them the hand of friendship.⁴

His purpose is not simply to fill in the gaps of Jewish history, but to construct a narrative of the Jew assuming the responsibilities and characteristics attributed to Englishmen. Christians who read this history will come to better appreciate "their Jewish fellow-countrymen" while Jews learn how they have come to take their place as "Englishmen of the Jewish faith." Picciotto works to establish the connections between these two groups of readers in his construction of an Anglo-Jewish identity.

Furthermore, Picciotto also describes the reciprocal relationship existing between Jew and Christian that is maintained, in part, by the latter's pre-occupation with demonstrating Jewish loyalty to the state. Jews evince the ability to develop deep patriotic feelings towards their adopted countries when treated fairly:

⁴Ibid., vi-vii.

We have repeatedly noticed the loyalty of the Jews, and the attachment and devotion they have invariably displayed towards governments of all countries...where they have met with common toleration and ordinary justice.⁵

The three hundred Jewish volunteers who "came forward to bear [their] full share of hardship and danger" when England fought with France in 1803 provide further evidence of the patriotism of Jewish citizens. In fact, Anglo-Jews "have ever been ready, as circumstances occurred, to pray for the recovery of a sick monarch, to offer thanks for his escape from the bullet or the knife of the assassin, to rejoice at his marriage, or mourn his death."⁶ Jews who are "appointed by the votes of their Christian fellow-countrymen" fulfill their duties "with modesty, yet with liberality and dignity" as well.⁷ Jewish behavior validates the success of toleration as a force in the development of loyal citizens.

The English also enhance their reputation for justice and liberality by fostering the increased social and political mobility of Anglo-Jews. These advancements of Anglo-Jews exemplify how the English sense of liberality helps keep oppressive practices in check:

for however prejudiced and intolerant an Englishman may be, there is usually in his composition a sense of honour and justice, that prevents him from having recourse to unfair, not to say nefarious, practices even to

⁵Ibid., 276-7.

⁶Ibid., 277.

⁷Ibid., 395.

accomplish a favourite object.⁸

Picciotto implies that the English treatment of Jews, especially in the nineteenth century, repeatedly exemplifies this "sense of honour and justice." This argument gains greater force when Picciotto observes that professing Jews may enter into public service:

To abandon one's faith is no longer regarded as a passport to good society, or as a preliminary to entrance into public life. Apostasy is not considered by right-minded Christians as a title to their confidence, and a conscientious Jew may aspire to serve his country and to rise to high dignity, and still remain an open and zealous believer in the Lord of Israel.⁹

"Right-minded Christians" not only allow the professing Jew to run for public office, but with the election of two Jews as Lord Mayor, the "city of London [is]...justly celebrated for its liberal and enlightened policy, and for its complete freedom from intolerance and prejudice."¹⁰ The treatment of professing Jews also becomes a gauge by which to measure the "liberality" and "enlightenment" of English society itself.

Nineteenth-century reviewers of Picciotto's history not only share his view of the reciprocal relationship between the Jews and the English, but they add their own arguments to further this perspective. The British Quarterly Review asserts that "the rise and history of the Jewish community in

⁸Ibid., 284-5.

⁹Ibid., 306.

¹⁰Ibid., 387.

London alone is a very romantic chapter of our history."¹¹ Israel Davis of The Athenaeum sees the increased toleration of Jews as "an interesting and typical part of English history." In fact, Davis sees the "history of the Jews" as a microcosmic version of English social progress:

The contrast between the beginning and the end of the period covered by the book before us is indeed very great, and the history of the Jews during that period is an epitome of English history, in its gradual abolition of privilege on the one hand and of religious disability on the other. It shows the spirit of fairness prevailing at length over all sorts of interested opposition, over strong and natural prejudices; it shows the vitality of a good race which, long cut off from the best opportunities of culture...kept alive stocks able to do so much useful work as soon as their country allowed them to take a place among honoured workers.¹²

This account of Jewish survival in England may be seen as limiting the history of the community to a minor role in English history. It also seems to indicate an awareness that England's Jewish citizens are indeed part of the nation, who cannot be simply compartmentalized as the "other." For according to this reviewer and others like him, minimizing or ignoring the significance of Anglo-Jewish history would mean disregarding some of the most important aspects of social and political progress in England.

Like Picciotto, the reviewers also see this history as

¹¹"Contemporary Literature," review of Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History, by James Picciotto, The British Quarterly Review 63 (January 1876): 200.

¹²Israel Davis, review of Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History, by James Picciotto, The Academy 9 (April 1876): 304-5.

functioning as proof of the Jews' worthiness to be English citizens. The Saturday Review draws attention to the early persecutions of the Jews in England, noting that "no race of inferior tenacity or endurance could have passed through the ordeal and lived."¹³ The London Quarterly recounts the "progress" made by the community with the observation that "the latter years have witnessed the highest municipal dignity occupied, with honour and credit, by a Jew," and it also notes that "even the most important national affairs could scarcely be carried on but for the thrift and consequent wealth of this once feeble and despised community."¹⁴ Jews have not only attained positions of "dignity," but they also have demonstrated their concern for England by helping conduct "national affairs." This sort of "progress" attained by the mutual efforts of Christians and Jews should dictate both the current and future treatment of the Jewish community:

Making all possible allowance for national bias on the part of this historian, there remains enough here to convince those least disposed in favor of the Hebrew community, that countless prejudices which have been entertained are wholly baseless; and that our fellow-countrymen of the Jewish faith are, as a body, a highly meritorious set of people....¹⁵

These visions of England and the Jewish community are

¹³"Picciotto's Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History," review of Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History, by James Picciotto, The Saturday Review 41 (January 1876): 20.

¹⁴"Literary Notices," review of Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History, by James Picciotto, The London Quarterly Review 47 (October 1876): 237.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 238.

important for both Jews and Christians. For Christians, this vision reaffirms the role of government as a moral agent, and for Jews, it helps ensure continued tolerance because of its ties to morality. The success of the Jewish community in England as outlined by Picciotto also reinforces the idea that England is a progressive state exhibiting the highest qualities of a civilized society. By stressing the contributions of Jews to this state, Picciotto and his reviewers also indirectly argue for the fitness of the "race" and Judaism to participate in the development of Victorian society. In this way, Picciotto's work also continues to outline the nuances involved in being both a good Jew and a good English citizen.

Reviews of Picciotto's Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History appeared in 1876, and were published in several of the same journals that reviewed George Eliot's Daniel Deronda. The reading public was simultaneously exposed to accounts of Anglo-Jewish life in two different genres, history and fiction. These works also seem to have very different outlooks on the state of the Jewish community in England. While Picciotto does not neglect to mention the early persecution of the Jews in England, his view of nineteenth-century society focusses on toleration and liberality. He also measures the "progress" of the community in terms of the social and political mobility of upper- and middle-class Jews, and the development of communal organizations. Picciotto's

description of Anglo-Jewish life is optimistic because of its tendency to minimize the subtle but persistent social prejudices that Anglo-Jews continued to face. However, his history presents a narrative of Jewish life that works to tighten political ties between Jews and non-Jews as well as to generate historical and cultural links between the two groups. Eliot portrays Anglo-Jews as weighed down, at the very least, by subtle social prejudices. Her concern is not with the official institutions of the community, nor with the upper-class, but with the Jewish poor. These differing visions of the community also lead to diametrically opposed conclusions as to what its future will be: Picciotto looks forward to the community's increased prosperity in England while Eliot argues that its future rests in the revival of a Jewish state.

While Eliot shares with Picciotto the desire to educate her readers about the lives of Jews in England, Mordecai's pronouncement that the "fresh-made garment of citizenship" can be easily discarded is antithetical to the emergence of an "Anglo-Jewish" identity. In this way, Eliot's novel presents a sharp contrast to Picciotto's history that emphasizes the "rootedness" of the community in England, and Jews' fulfillment of their responsibilities as citizens. Daniel Deronda may reveal social prejudices experienced by nineteenth-century Jews, but it does little in the way of constructing an "Anglo-Jewish" identity. Much of the uncertainty and ambiguity that characterized Deronda's

personal history and Mordecai's "Zionist" vision is symptomatic of the more generally ill-defined conception of the Jew as an English citizen. Even though the novel details the richness of Jewish history and the spirituality of Judaism, it does not assign a role in English society to the professing Jew. This chapter will argue that Daniel Deronda continually fails to articulate an "Anglo-Jewish" identity for its characters, and in this way, it suggests that the professing Jew can never fully assume the role of English citizen.

However, the complex identity of the Jew as English citizen that is dismissed in Eliot's novel and oversimplified in Picciotto's history, seems to hinge on the more general question of how citizenship is defined throughout the nineteenth century. In his study of the Anglo-Jewish community, Feldman traces the concept of "nation" from the period of Jewish emancipation to the Bulgarian agitation in the 1870s.¹⁶ He concludes that "the idea of the nation to which the Jews had been admitted was dynamic and this was one reason why Jewish emancipation did not bring the problem of Jewish integration to a close."¹⁷ The approval of the Jew as citizen was often contingent upon how a given political question influenced the idea of "nation," rather than on a

¹⁶This discussion of the concept of nation is based on Feldman, 73-120.

¹⁷Ibid., 75.

tolerant view of the Jewish community itself. Shifts in the concept of "race" as well as "the nation" were to alter attitudes towards Jews since they were identified as both a racial and religious minority. During the struggle for emancipation, "race" was not a significant component in the concept of nation. Instead, the "nation" was a "political construct" that focussed on "a set of liberties guaranteed to the individual and wrung from an oppressive monarchy." Since the emphasis was placed "on a relation between the individual and the state" rather than on "the people themselves and their culture," this concept of nation "provided a space in which the ideal of 'spiritual nationality' could flourish," so that the Jews' "spiritual nationality" was not highly criticized.¹⁸ Jewish distinctiveness did not pose a challenge to this idea of the nation because the liberties of the individual received greater attention than the issue of "race" or national "culture."

With the success of parliamentary reform, this vision of citizenship shifted to one that emphasized cultural continuity and the moral integrity of the government. The "liberalism" of parliamentary reform resulted in "an attempt to redefine the national community in terms of its citizenry as well as the country's institutions."¹⁹ This "redefinition" of the nation focussed on the "historical and cultural bonds of

¹⁸Ibid., 70-1.

¹⁹Ibid., 73.

nationality" to define the relationship between the people and the state. In On Representative Government (1861), John Stuart Mill argues for the importance of nationality as the basis for government, because he felt "that representative institutions were almost impossible to maintain in a country composed of different nationalities."²⁰ Feldman observes that Mill's idea of nation was in opposition to "cultural diversity" since those cultures deemed "inferior" were simply "absorbed" by more dominant ones. This concept of the nation implies that Jewish distinctiveness would eventually give way to the more dominant culture, and that the Jewish minority will be "absorbed" by the English majority. Goldwin Smith implies such a process will take place in his articles questioning the Jews' ability to be patriotic.

Finally, the increased number of nonconformist members of Parliament added a religious dimension to the concept of the "nation" as well. Their influence on the concept of national identity mingled "populist Christianity" with "Constitutional radicalism." During the Bulgarian agitation of the 1870s, the Liberals' idea of patriotism conflicted with Prime Minister Disraeli's conservative views: the former saw patriotism as "disinterested attachment to the common good," and a guarantee of freedoms for the people, while the latter identified it with the constitution and the nation's institutions. The Liberals were "work[ing] towards a remoralized polity; one

²⁰Ibid., 73.

that would suppress personal interest through an appreciation of the bonds of community in civil society or through the realisation of a Christian government."²¹ With the extension of the franchise in 1867, this idea of "government as a disinterested expression of a moralized and Christian nation" gained further popularity. The failure of this "harmonious political community" to emerge was blamed on the self-interest of Disraeli's imperialist policies and the monetary interests of the Jewish community at large. Feldman explains that it was considered "natural" for Disraeli to formulate a "Jewish policy" for his own political or economic pursuits during this agitation, but that "imposing it on the nation violated traditions of English and Christian liberty." Consequently, Jewish distinctiveness, or "unassimilability," was defined in terms of "the opposition of Judaism to Christianity" and racial difference. The loyalty of the Jews as English citizens was called into question as evidenced by the anti-Semitic rhetoric emerging at the time of the Bulgarian agitation.

The unstable conception of the Jew as English citizen that Feldman traces in his study finds a parallel in the shifting nature of Deronda's identity throughout the novel. Although Eliot hints at the mystery surrounding his birth, she also provides much information in the novel that identifies Deronda with "Englishness." When Gwendolen Harleth first

²¹Ibid., 97.

observes Deronda from the gambling table, her inquiries about him are met with the assurance that he is an "Englishman" who "is reported to be rather closely related to the baronet."²² He is repeatedly referred to as Sir Hugo's nephew even though much of society has concluded that Deronda is really an illegitimate child: "No one was better aware than he [Sir Hugo] that Daniel was generally suspected to be his own son. But he was pleased with that suspicion...."²³

In addition, his education is characteristically English since Sir Hugo desires him "to have the education of an English gentleman." Deronda attends Eton and then moves on to Cambridge, which allows him to receive both public school and university training. When Sir Hugo questions Deronda's desire to be "English," the latter explains that he has simply found university life too limited: "I want to be an Englishman, but I want to understand other points of view. And I want to get rid of a merely English attitude in studies."²⁴ Deronda returns from his tour of Europe to study law, and at Sir Hugo's insistence, is asked to consider entering Parliament. His lack of interest in politics seems to be partly attributed to the uncertainty of youth rather than to some "unEnglish" quality. To all outward appearances, Deronda seems to be a typical young Englishman of the upper class.

²²Eliot, Daniel Deronda, 42.

²³Ibid., 214.

²⁴Ibid., 224.

Except for the ignorance of his Jewish origins, Deronda has much in common with the highly anglicized Jews of the nineteenth century.²⁵ Endelman points out that the drive for acculturation among native born Jews had been extremely successful: "By the end of the century, the Jewish community in England had become overwhelmingly English in manner, speech, dress, deportment, and habits of thought and taste."²⁶ The acceptance of new wealth from "the City" made it "possible for rich Jews to gain admission to smart society without changing their religion."²⁷ The participation of wealthy Jews in politics also brought them into contact with non-Jews. By the 1870s, Jewish parents were able to send their sons to public schools which exempted them from religious education, so that they associated with those "likely to occupy positions of status and power later in

²⁵Feldman describes "acculturation" as "an accommodation to non-Jewish standards that was less complete than assimilation, in which Jewish religion or culture was not renounced." The term "acculturation" is used interchangeably with "anglicization" in this discussion. Ibid., 5.

²⁶Endelman, Radical Assimilation, 73.

²⁷This financial mobility of Jews was not only noticeable because of the wealthy banking families such as the Rothschilds. Endelman explains that the economic profile of the native Jewish community was transformed in the Victorian period: "In 1882, Joseph Jacobs estimated that in London Jewry (whose population he calculated was 46,000) 14.6 percent were upper- or upper middle-class, 42.2 percent were middle-class, 19.6 percent were lower-class, and 29.6 percent were poor, that is, in receipt of casual relief or in institutions." Endelman also notes that the number of middle-class and upper middle-class families was probably higher than these numbers indicate, since the influx of Eastern European Jews inflated the percentages in the poor classes. Ibid., 74.

life."²⁸ Even the religious practices of wealthy Jews were influenced by "patterns of Victorian religiosity." Their attitudes towards the place of religious worship in nineteenth-century life were modelled after those of "respectable society" such as the "Anglican upper middle-class."²⁹ Endelman does note that highly acculturated Jews still tended to prefer Jewish society, and had a strong sense of ethnic cohesiveness, but much of their outlook and most of their social practices were characteristically English in nature.³⁰

While Endelman describes Victorians as generally tolerant of acculturated Jews, he also notes that subtle prejudices remained even in the most elite reaches of society. Compared to the virulent forms of anti-Semitism in Germany, Endelman describes English prejudices as "tepid and benign": "In most cases, their major impact was psychological. They were a source of inner turmoil and tension, causing some acculturated, native-born Jews to feel uncomfortable about their Jewishness and occasionally generating mild feelings of self-contempt."³¹ This sort of prejudice was not present at a "formal, institutional level," but it nonetheless continued to raise "doubts about the assimilability of Jews and their

²⁸Ibid., 78.

²⁹Ibid., 86.

³⁰Ibid., 92.

³¹Ibid., 101.

fitness to play a role in polite society and public life."³² In particular, aristocratic families "were far from enthusiastic about the entry of Jews into upper-class society." Thus acculturation did not prove to be the antidote to prejudice that many Jewish communal leaders hoped it would be. Endelman points out that acquiring "Englishness" alone did not quell doubts about the "fitness" of Jews for public life and polite society: "To otherwise tolerant Englishmen, Jews could seem, no matter how thoroughly steeped in Englishness, disquietingly different and even alien."³³

This persistent conception of the Jews as aliens implies a certain "illegitimacy" in their claim to English citizenship. This specter of "illegitimacy" also follows Deronda throughout the novel, and links him to the more general corruption of English society. At thirteen, Deronda begins to question his own legitimacy while reading "Sismondi's History of the Italian Republic." He is puzzled to learn "that the popes and cardinals always had so many nephews." When he questions this account, his tutor rebuffs the young boy by informing him that "it was just for the propriety of the thing" because "priests don't marry, and the children were illegitimate."³⁴ Deronda draws a parallel between the "priests" and Sir Hugo to conclude that the

³²Ibid., 98.

³³Ibid., 100.

³⁴Eliot, Daniel Deronda, 203.

baronet is his father. When this rumor circulates in Victorian society, Sir Hugo not only willingly allows it to go uncorrected, but even derives pleasure from this false identity as Deronda's father. Deronda's "illegitimacy" becomes indicative of the breakdown of individual integrity as exemplified by the baronet's behavior. By linking Sir Hugo's falsity with that of historical religious figures, Eliot also implies that the failure of individual integrity endangers the moral fabric of society. Sir Hugo seems to be perpetuating a pattern of immorality that can be traced back to the popes of the Italian republic.

Deronda's mysterious parentage also juxtaposes the claims of the "illegitimate" son to those of the "English-born" Jew. As the "illegitimate" son of Sir Hugo, Deronda seems to be denied the inheritance that should be rightfully his. Deronda is paralleled to the illegitimate children of Mallinger Grandcourt; the latter refuses to marry their mother, and fulfill his parental obligation to legitimize his son's lineage. Throughout the most of the novel, the reader is encouraged to sympathize with these children who are denied their birthrights to their father's property, and to the continuity of Englishness as represented by their claim to be members of the aristocracy. When Deronda's Jewishness is discovered, his implied claim of inheritance is found to be fraudulent. His "Jewishness" prevents him from claiming a place in the continuity of English culture, and undermines his

relationship to "mother" England. This association of Deronda with "illegitimacy" seems to encapsulate the uncertain position of the Anglo-Jew as does Mirah's response to his inquiry about her "Englishness": "'Yes I will tell you. I am English born. But I am a Jewess.'" ³⁵ As a native-born Jew, Mirah is an English citizen, but Jewishness seems to compromise this claim since she asks Deronda if he despises for it.

The only way for Deronda to claim his own "legitimacy" is by openly acknowledging that he is a Jew, and not an English Christian. Princess Halm-Eberstein eventually reveals the attempt that she and Sir Hugo made to hide Deronda's Jewish origins so that he might be raised with the advantages of an English gentleman. Throughout the novel, Deronda has been steadily prepared to appreciate these origins through his contact with Jewish characters, and his study of Jewish history. The meeting with his mother provides Deronda with a chance to restore his "legitimacy" by declaring that he is glad to be a Jew: "'And for months events have been preparing me to be glad that I am a Jew....It is no shame to have Jewish parents--the shame is to disown it.'" ³⁶

Deronda is the model Jew, who rather than enjoy the advantages of being known simply as an Englishman, prefers to openly recognize his Jewish origins. This voluntary

³⁵Ibid., 234.

³⁶Ibid., 698.

confession of Jewishness removes the threat of the "illegitimate Jew" circulating in English society. Ragussis argues that this act of self-assertion frees Deronda from being victimized by "the secret of his Jewish origins":

So it is fitting that Deronda's most liberated moment comes with his open acknowledgement of his Jewish identity--that is, with his refusal of the secrecy of his Jewish identity.³⁷

However, Eliot implies that this action reverberates throughout society so that "Jewishness" is not strictly a private matter. The Jews must be "named" or "labelled" as such, otherwise they may fraudulently lay claim to Englishness. The far-reaching effects of Deronda's acknowledgement include exposing the corruption in English society to some degree, and restoring its moral integrity. The falseness of Sir Hugo and Princess Halm-Eberstein is revealed, since Deronda can now acknowledge his true origins. Mordecai's vision of a Jewish polity with its renewed spiritual mission can now be carried out by the Jewish Deronda. The separateness of races can be maintained since Deronda will marry Mirah, and his attraction to Gwendolen Harleth can lead to nothing more than friendship.

Both fiction and biography provide accounts of Jews successfully passing as "Englishmen." These accounts suggest that an open acknowledgement of Jewishness continued to be disadvantageous even into the following century. In The

³⁷Ragussis, 289.

Children of the Ghetto (1892), Israel Zangwill describes a character who so entirely passes as an "Englishman" that he becomes engaged to a woman of one of England's better families. Sidney consciously decides to marry outside the Jewish community and had engaged himself to Miss Hannibal. After some further soul searching, he realizes that he must abandon Miss Hannibal for his true love, the Jewish Addie. He later desires to confide in Addie about how his Jewishness alone sufficed as a reason to break the former engagement:

He wanted to work round to it like that, to tell her of his engagement to Miss Hannibal at least, and how, on discovering with whom he was really in love, he had got out of it simply by writing to the Wesleyan M. P. that he was a Jew--a fact sufficient to disgust the disciple of Dissent and the claimant champion of religious liberty.³⁸

The fact that Sidney's Jewishness prompted sufficient "disgust" to break the engagement indicates the limitation placed on the social circles a Jew could enter no matter how well he mastered the skills of a gentleman. Furthermore, the ability of Sidney to enter into the most intimate aspects of "English" family life without being detected as a Jew implies his high degree of anglicization. This would suggest the need to provide positive models of individuals asserting their Jewishness, since without such a voluntary admission the Jew might go undetected. Like Sydney, Deronda serves as such a model by acknowledging his Jewishness, but instead of breaking an engagement, he leaves England.

³⁸Zangwill, The Children of the Ghetto, 499.

Endelman's historical study of radical assimilation also provides examples of converts to Christianity and others with Jewish ancestry who felt their background to be a serious liability. For example, the sister-in-law of Sir Francis Palgrave describes how he never alluded to either his Jewish background or his original name of Cohen throughout the thirty years of his married life. The family of the economist David Ricardo (1772-1823) also desired their Jewish origins to be forgotten. When Moses Ricardo decided to write a biography of his brother, the family actively discouraged him because their Jewish ancestry would be made public. Some members of the family "professed to believe that their ancestors were originally Christians and became Jews only in the seventeenth-century," suggesting that this association was an "aberration."³⁹ Endelman considers these examples drawn from Anglo-Jewish history to be "striking testimony to the social stigma that still clung to Jewishness in the Victorian period."⁴⁰

While Deronda's recognition of Jewishness helps restore an uncompromised Englishness to his social circle, his action also indicates the difficulty of reconciling "Jewishness" with "Englishness." George Eliot believes that by maintaining the racial affinities between individuals, each nation will be able to contribute to the progress of humankind. Like the

³⁹Endelman, Radical Assimilation, 100.

⁴⁰Ibid., 100.

Jews in their bid for national survival, the English too must maintain those characteristics that influence their development as a nation. "The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!" criticizes many of the English attitudes towards Jews, but it also struggles with the need to maintain an "English" identity. Eliot notes the increasing number of immigrants, most of them Jewish, who come to England searching for employment. Though she believes that "the glorious flag of hospitality" should continue to wave, she does caution:

The tendency of things is towards the quicker or slower fusion of races. It is impossible to arrest this tendency: all we can do is to moderate its course so as to hinder it from degrading the moral status of societies by a too rapid effacement of those national traditions and customs which are the language of the national genius--the deep suckers of healthy sentiment.⁴¹

This spirit of racial separateness that is linked to the morality of society should not only be valued by Jews as Daniel Deronda illustrates but by Englishmen as well:

The fiery resolve to resist invasion...is felt to be virtuous....Because there is a national life in our veins. Because there is something specifically English which we feel to be supremely worth striving for....Because we too have our share--perhaps a principal share--in that spirit of separateness...which has created the varying genius of nations....⁴²

"Englishness" is not simply a pattern of social or cultural conventions, but it is tied to "racial separateness." Highly anglicized Jews pose a challenge to this association, since they have, for all practical purposes, mastered the

⁴¹George Eliot, The Writings of George Eliot, 20: 258.

⁴²Ibid., 259.

conventions of "Englishness." Unless the Jews willingly acknowledge their racial heritage, they pose a threat to the "national traditions" by hastening the "fusion of races" through intermarriage. This also makes it difficult to embrace them as true citizens contributing to the development of "English" national traditions.

Moreover, the departure of Mirah and Daniel for the East further supports the perspective that they must re-establish their own national traditions, rather than contribute as Jews to the development of English or Anglo-Jewish ones. Critics have interpreted this departure as both an affirmation of Jewishness and a withdrawal from the complications of English life. For example, Ragussis argues that by allowing her characters to "step outside the predominant configuration of Jewish identity in English discourse," the narrative serves as a critique of the "ideology of Jewish conversion," and allows the characters to reconstruct their own national identity apart from that of the English.⁴³ Martin Graham also sees this departure as necessitated for the full development of Deronda's identity, but he focusses on the character's transformation "from a critical presence within English society into an expatriate who has decided to go home."⁴⁴ By advocating a Zionist movement, Eliot allows Deronda to

⁴³Ragussis, 290.

⁴⁴Graham Martin, "'Daniel Deronda': George Eliot and Political Change" in Critical Essays on George Eliot, ed. Barbara Hardy (New York: Barnes, 1970), 147-8.

remain an "outsider," so that the ability of his ideals to impact English society is undercut: "The choice of Zionism has the effect of removing the ideal aspirations associated with Deronda from any effective engagement with the English scene."⁴⁵

Both of these critics indicate that the novel fails to articulate a role for the Jewish gentleman who assumes the responsibilities of English citizenship. The "Jewish" Deronda displaces the "English" Deronda who moved in the Gentile and fashionable circles of Sir Hugo. The gap that emerges between the "English" and "Jewish" Deronda is most apparent during his final meeting with Gwendolen. Deronda finds that he is unable to explain the "great difference" that the knowledge of his Jewish background has made in his life:

but he could not go on easily--the distance between her ideas and his acted like a difference of native language, making him uncertain what force his words would carry.⁴⁶

While Gwendolen's response belies her own prejudice towards Jews, the change in Daniel's feelings makes him unable to act as her advisor any longer. The "distance" between their ideas is paralleled to "a difference of native language," drawing attention to Deronda's new "national" or "racial" identity. The English woman and the Jewish man are no longer able to communicate the depth of their experience. For Daniel, this scene seems to embody the dichotomy pointed out by Endelman:

⁴⁵Ibid., 149.

⁴⁶Eliot, Daniel Deronda, 873.

he is "thoroughly steeped in Englishness," but yet to Gwendolen "disquietingly different and even alien." The novel provides no glimpse of a professing Jew balancing religious convictions with English gentility.⁴⁷ Even though the middle- and upper-class of Anglo-Jewry took on an active and public role in Victorian society, the novel avoids any mention of this group of Jews whose social circle the "gentleman" Deronda would most complement.

While Deronda's story reveals the uncertain position of the acculturated Jew in England, Mordecai's Zionist vision directly attacks the conception of Jew as English citizen. He portrays Jewish life in European nations as transient, and he provides numerous reasons for the Jew's inability to fully assume the role as "citizen." During the club meeting at the Hand and Banner, Mordecai argues that "citizenship" cannot embody the strength of feeling that is necessary to "knit together" a nation:

Can a fresh-made garment of citizenship weave itself straightway into flesh and change the slow deposit of eighteen centuries? What is the citizenship of him who walks among a people he has no hearty kindred and fellowship with, and has lost the sense of brotherhood with his own race? It is a charter of selfish ambition and rivalry in low greed. He is an alien spirit, whatever he may be in form; he sucks the blood of mankind, he is not a man. Sharing in no love, sharing in

⁴⁷Klesmer would seem to be the exception, but he provides no indication of Jewish religious convictions, and seems to remain in the idealized world of art. His marriage to Miss Arrowpoint also indicates that his social life remains outside upper- or middle-class Anglo-Jewish society.

no subjection of the soul, he mocks at all.⁴⁸

Not only is citizenship a "garment" that can easily be laid aside, but he describes Jews as unable to share "hearty kindred and fellowship" with their non-Jewish countrymen. The Jew hardly seems worthy of citizenship, since he is characterized by "selfish ambition" and "rivalry in low greed." He is "not a man" but a parasite of sort that "sucks the blood of mankind." The Jew always remains alien in spirit, so the extension of "citizenship" will do little to engender the quality of patriotism.

Indeed, Mordecai argues that the only way to engender this "sense of brotherhood" among Jews is to restore their nation. He calls for "another great migration, another choosing of Israel to be a nationality" so that Jews may "have a national hearth and a tribunal of national opinion."⁴⁹ The establishment of this "national hearth" will free Jews from the oppression confronting them in European nations, and allow for the development of the "Jewish spirit":

Our national life was a growing light....The degraded and scorned of our race will learn to think of their sacred land...as a republic where the Jewish spirit manifests itself in a new order founded on the old, purified, enriched by the experience of our greatest sons have gathered from the life of ages.⁵⁰

This "republic" will act to protect the rights of Jews and

⁴⁸Ibid., 587.

⁴⁹Ibid., 596.

⁵⁰Ibid., 597.

also allow for their wrongs to be redressed:

There is a store of wisdom among us to found a new Jewish polity...a republic where there is equality of protection....Then our race shall have an organic centre...the outraged Jew shall have a defence in the court of nations, as the outraged Englishman or American.⁵¹

However, this function of "a new Jewish polity" seems to relieve European republics of any responsibility for Jews living in their midst, since it will serve as "a defence in the court of nations." Just as the Jews have been shown to be unfit to share in the "fellowship" of citizenship, so too will republics such as England find it unnecessary to redress the wrongs perpetuated against them. Mordecai's argument undermines the pleas made by Anglo-Jewry on numerous occasions for England to intervene on behalf of their "foreign" co-religionists, such as the Damascus Jews accused of murdering a priest.⁵² Anglo-Jewry has argued that a civilized and Christian people like the English should feel compelled to intervene on humanitarian grounds rather than on "national" ones.

Mordecai sees the restoration not only as providing a

⁵¹Ibid., 594-5.

⁵²In the 1840s, the Jews of Damascus were accused of murdering Father Thomas who was an Italian priest that visited the Jewish quarter for the "purposes of vaccination" and then disappeared. It was supposed that the Jews killed him to obtain blood for their Passover cakes. Reprisals for the priest's death were taken by the population against the Jews, until the wealthy Anglo-Jew Moses Montefiore finally intervened on their behalf, resulting in a repudiation of the charges. Picciotto, Sketches, 349-352.

"national hearth" and preserving the Jewish "race," but also as revitalizing the spirituality of Judaism. While the previous chapter has shown that this is one of the factors in Daniel Deronda's popularity, Mordecai's speech implies that the highest development of Judaism can only be achieved as part of a national revival. This indicates that if Judaism is left to the diaspora it can only have a tenuous existence, and perhaps, will have an uncertain future. The diaspora is continuously displayed as incompetent in looking after its own religious future, even though Eliot gives numerous examples of Jewish philosophers who have done so throughout history. The diaspora is described as "the multitudes of ignorant" who are unable to appreciate their own Jewish heritage:

The heritage of Israel is beating in the pulses of millions, it lives in their veins as a power without understanding....[I]t is the inborn half of memory, moving as in a dream among writings on the walls, which it sees dimly but cannot divide into speech. Let the torch of visible community be lit!⁵³

Like little Jacob who blankly recites the Hebrew verses that Mordecai teaches him, the meaning and implications of Jewish teaching is equally incomprehensible to Jews living throughout Europe. The diaspora has just "the inborn half of memory" and "sees dimly" its own heritage. The advent of the Jewish polity will insure "the fulfillment of the religious trust" that Jewish separateness has attempted to preserve throughout

⁵³Eliot, Daniel Deronda, 596.

the centuries.⁵⁴ This sort of argument implies that the new polity needs not only to address the oppression of Jews, but that it will work as a corrective to a Judaism tarnished by "superstition" and in need of "the illumination of great facts which widen feeling, and make all knowledge alive."⁵⁵ In other words, it will remedy Jewish "exclusiveness" and "narrow-mindedness," so that Mordecai himself perpetuates the very stigmas that his "new polity" is supposed to remove.

The debate between Mordecai, Gideon and Pasha also implies that there is no intermediary role in which Jews can function as both faithful to their religion and responsible citizens. Gideon advocates the perspective that assimilation through intermarriage and the abandonment of distinctive religious practices will augment the Jews' chances for social acceptance. He characterizes himself as "a rational Jew" who disapproves of baptism and sees his Jewishness as "a sort of family relations," but he does not believe there is any reason for maintaining the group's distinctiveness:

But I am for getting rid of all our superstitions and exclusiveness. There's no reason now why we shouldn't melt gradually into the populations we live among....I would as soon my children married Christians as Jews. And I'm for the old maxim, "A man's country is where he's well off."⁵⁶

He specifically sees intermarriage, which in most cases

⁵⁴Ibid., 594.

⁵⁵Ibid., 592.

⁵⁶Ibid., 586.

involved the abandonment of Judaism, as the key to the removal of prejudices. It is a promising development since "many of our people are on a footing with the best, and there's been a good filtering of our blood into high families."

In the context of this argument for intermarriage, Gideon's other comments on religious reform seem to simply imply his desire for a convenience rather than spirituality:

The most learned and liberal men among us who are attached to our religion are for clearing our liturgy of all such notions as a literal fulfillment of the prophecies about restoration, and so on. Prune it of a few useless rites and literal interpretations of that sort, and our religion is the simplest of all religions, and makes no barrier but a union, between us and the rest of the world.⁵⁷

Religious reformers did not simply "prune [Judaism] of a few useless rites and literal interpretations," but instead, looked for ways to make it meaningful to a community strongly influenced by its evangelical environment. Gideon's comments cause "reform" to lose the sense of conviction or concern for Jewish spiritual needs in a post-emancipation society that is exhibited by Anglo-Jewish leaders. It is characterized as an attempt to totally assimilate the Jewish population rather than to respond to the needs of acculturated Jews. Consequently, his views deny Anglo-Jews the autonomy to shape their religious practices without being suspect, and also prevent the emergence of a truly Jewish contribution to English spiritual life because they question the devotion of

⁵⁷Ibid., 593.

those Jews remaining in England.

Similarly, Pasha shares this vision of reform as well as exhibits a penchant for material success that is so frequently used to characterize the English Jew. He compares Judaism to "a pike staff" that needs to be "plucked" from the ground, and "stripped" of its "leaves and the bark" so it will never "sprout," and ultimately may be treated as "rubbish."⁵⁸ Judaism so stripped of all its distinctive components will not impose on his ability to earn a living. In fact, Pasha assures Mordecai that he will gladly move to the Holy Land if trade is good there: "'If somebody will introduce a brisk trade in watches among the 'Jerusalem Wares,' I'll go--eh, Mordecai, what do you say?'"⁵⁹ Pasha is the opportunistic Jew whose concern for the Holy Land and England is dictated by his desire for material gain. Pasha and Gideon not only contrast to Mordecai, but they seem to bear out his observations that the "multitudes" will slowly drift away from Judaism. The scenes in the Hand and Banner fail to negate any positive vision of Jews, attempting to maintain their distinctive Jewishness while also successfully participating in post-emancipation society.

However, various articles appearing in The Jewish Chronicle during the nineteenth century indicate that there are other alternatives for Jews besides those represented by

⁵⁸Ibid., 593-4.

⁵⁹Ibid., 586.

Mordecai, Gideon, and Pasha. The paper presents an image of Jews who were in some way attempting to balance their distinctiveness with their obligations as citizens. As early as 1874, the author of "The Position of the Jewish Community" observes that the role of Jews in the nation still needs to be further clarified: "The civil, social, and other national disabilities of Jews have not been so long removed as to enable us fully to comprehend the position we occupy, or ought to occupy, in the state."⁶⁰ Yet, this uncertain position does not prevent the paper from arguing that the protection of Jewish "religious" interests in no way conflicts with the fulfillment of other duties as a citizens. The "acquisition of political rights" is not to be considered synonymous with "any abandonment of our religious distinctiveness," except by "the most weak-minded and most narrow-minded of Jews."⁶¹ The paper shares with Mordecai the dislike of "weak-minded" Jews, but it does not see the acquisition of "Englishness" as indicative of the loss of "religious distinctiveness" or of assimilation:

As Jews let us be earnest Jews; as Englishmen let us be earnest Englishmen. The duties of our faith and race will not interfere with our duties of citizenship; nor will our duties of citizenship militate against our duties of faith and race.⁶²

⁶⁰"The Position of the Jewish Community," The Jewish Chronicle, 6 February 1874, p. 753.

⁶¹Ibid., 754.

⁶²Ibid., 754.

Racial differences will not hamper the strong emotional attachments of the Jews to England, since they consider themselves for "all intents and purposes...quite as fully Englishmen by birth, feeling, right, privilege and duty, as if they were members of the National Church."⁶³ In this way, the loyalty of the Jews should not be questioned when they need to act on behalf of their own "religious interests," because they so fully identified themselves as English.

The Jewish Chronicle had earlier attempted to put an end to the supposition that Jewish "national" feeling animates the community in "Jewish Nationality" (1865). As in the previous article, the pivotal argument is that "a man may be a thorough Englishman and yet a thorough Jew." If this seems difficult to understand, it is because "a confusion in the classifying of men according to creed and according to country, leads to a difficulty in comprehending the difference between an ethnological and religious nationality on the one hand, and a local nationality on the other."⁶⁴ The exceptional existence of the Jewish people itself is responsible for the "living History" of their "nationality" that is maintained through the "observances of historical memorials by religious celebrations." A conflict between the Jews' "ethnological and religious nationality" and "present and political" one arises

⁶³Ibid., 753.

⁶⁴"Jewish Nationality," The Jewish Chronicle, 17 March 1865, p. 4.

only when "we confound the question of creed with that of country, and [when] we confound their traditions, consequences, and connections."⁶⁵

This perspective attempts to accommodate both "Jewishness" and "Englishness" by suggesting that these qualities influence different aspects of the individual's life. It addresses Jews who might hide their Jewish background so as not to seem "foreign," and by this behavior imply that "Jewishness" and "Englishness" are incompatible:

But what are we to say of those Jews whose language asserts or whose conduct implies the existence of an incompatibility between Jew and Briton...that in proportion as their Jewish characteristics become reduced their quality of Englishman becomes increased.⁶⁶

In addition, this perspective also responds to non-Jews who find this Jewish "lineage" an anomaly. Since "the Englishman traces back his lineage to its Anglo-Saxon origin," the Anglo-Jew should be able to do likewise without calling into question his attachment to England:

In this there is neither anomaly or paradox, Jews born in England are Englishmen, whose fathers had a history of their own, the records of which they keep alive, the memories of which they still keep green and fresh.⁶⁷

In other words, they lay claim to their "Englishness" while keeping the "memories," but not the "political nationality" alive.

⁶⁵Ibid., 4.

⁶⁶Ibid., 4.

⁶⁷Ibid., 4.

This attempt to balance "Englishness" and "Jewishness" is irrelevant to Mordecai with his desire to undertake the restoration. If the Jewish experience in England is of value, it is because it will help provide wealthy and educated Jews to act as leaders:

Let the wealthy men, the monarchs of commerce, the learned in all knowledge, the skillful in all arts, the speakers, the political counsellors who carry in their veins the Hebrew blood which has maintained its vigour...let them say, 'we will lift up a standard, we will unite in a labour...which shall be a worthy fruit of long anguish whereby our fathers maintained their separateness, refusing the ease of falsehood.'⁶⁸

He acknowledges that these Jews "have wealth enough to redeem the soil from debauched and paupered conquerors" as well as the "skills" of the "statesmen" and "orators" to undertake this movement and to persuade others to follow suit. Affluent Jews are expected not only to contribute monetarily to this cause, but also to be its very leaders. Mordecai criticizes those communal leaders who have no interest in his writings, and indicates here that those who do not support the movement for restoration are neglecting their religious duties.

This seemingly "philo-Semitic" Zionist vision is also used as a basis for attacks on wealthy Jews. In an article discussing geographical exploration of Palestine, Hepworth Dixon expresses his frustration with the Jews for not

⁶⁸Eliot, Daniel Deronda, 594.

enthusiastically supporting his colonization efforts.⁶⁹ He explains that Palestine is to be colonized by Jews in order to prevent the Turks and Arabs from occupying it, or as Dixon says "to drive back the Salhaan Rovers, and to hold the swarthy children of Golban in check."⁷⁰ This will actively help bolster England's influence in the area and protect various trade routes. The Jews are expected to participate in this project because they will recover their homeland. When he is confronted with Jewish apathy, Dixon partly attributes it to the Jews' long stay in "foreign lands, where they had time to forget their ownership of the sacred soil." However, Dixon also believes that religious hypocrisy is a factor, since "it is only in prayers that a Jew now turned his face towards Jerusalem." This sort of religious hypocrisy that relegates the hopes of restoration only to prayers is also linked to the Jewish penchant for materialism and personal comfort:

Rothschild could buy up the fee simple Palestine. Goldsmid might rebuild the Temple of Herod. Montefiore has money enough to cast a golden statue of King Solomon. But of these wealthy Hebrews, not one is willing to go back. Rich Jews build charming villas...on the downs of Kent and Sussex....The seed of Israel cling to every soil

⁶⁹In Culture and Anarchy, Arnold referred to Dixon as "the Colenso of love and marriage," because he supported the bill which would allow "a man to marry his deceased wife's sister." Arnold saw Dixon as yet another liberal who blindly pursued personal liberty rather than allow for the "free spontaneous play of consciousness," when addressing complex social problems.

⁷⁰Hepworth Dixon, "Recovery of Palestine," The Gentleman's Magazine 241 (August 1876): 165.

except their own.⁷¹

Though this colonization effort is initially couched in terms that seem sympathetic to Jews, it becomes a way to question the moral and religious convictions of the wealthy financiers and to further characterize the Jew as pre-occupied with material gain. Both Mordecai and Dixon imply that Jews who do not support a Zionist movement financially and ideologically are not true to their race or religion.

While Mordecai stresses the need for a new Jewish polity, he prefers not to dictate the proper course of action to his co-religionists, but relies on "human choice." Yet, this reliance carries with it a stigma for those who prefer to remain in the diaspora:

I say that the strongest principle of growth lies in human choice. The sons of Judah have to choose that God may again choose them. The Messianic time is the time when Israel shall will the planting of the national ensign.⁷²

Those Jews who do not participate in "the planting of the national ensign" are portrayed as transgressing God's future plans for them. In fact, they jeopardize the future not only of the Jews, but of humankind:

Let us...help to will our own better future and the better future of the world--not renounce our higher gift...but choose our full heritage, claim the brotherhood of our nation, and carry into it a new brotherhood with the nations of the Gentile. The vision

⁷¹Ibid., 167.

⁷²Eliot, Daniel Deronda, 598.

is there; it will be fulfilled.⁷³

The Jews of the diaspora effectually have no "choice" but must agree with Mordecai's call for a "Jewish polity" since their relationship to God and their "higher gift" require their commitment. His reasoning here raises suspicion about the Jews asserting their loyalty to England. The Jew who fulfills this role as English citizen cannot be acting with the highest moral integrity, since such behavior conflicts with the fulfillment of his or her historical and religious duty.

Mordecai's argument here outlines two competing discourses with regards to the vision of the Jew as an English citizen, both of which imply that the demands of "Jewishness" can never be reconciled to those of "Englishness." The "good Jew" is portrayed as the "questionable Englishman" because in the strict adherence to his prayers, he desires to return to a Jewish homeland and abandon his adopted country. This provides evidence for the Jews seeming lack of true allegiance and feelings of patriotism for England. In contrast, the "bad Jew" is portrayed as the "good Englishman." This alternative narrative depicts the "bad Jew" as a hypocrite who prays for the restoration but wishes to remain in England because it offers more physical comfort and affluence. Mordecai's exclusively portrays the "good Jew" as one willing to support restoration, and refuses to offer any alternative to this viewpoint. Consequently, Mordecai's view undermines any

⁷³Ibid., 598.

possibility of a consensual agreement among Jews as to their role in English society, and helps foster a distrust of the Jews by their fellow-countrymen.

Jewish critics respond to this Zionist vision in rather complicated ways. They do not abandon the novel even though it seems to undermine communal stability in England, nor do they deny its Zionist vision, but instead they carefully qualify it. Daniel Deronda functions as an important proof of Jewish spirituality, just as it affirms many values that Jewish leaders felt were necessary in maintaining the stability of the community. Thus, Jewish reviewers who wanted to downplay Eliot's argument for a Jewish political future qualify this aspect of her work by explaining how this Zionist vision is difficult to implement. They emphasize the nobility of Mordecai's vision, one that is supported by the Bible itself, but at the same time, carefully point out the impossibility of it ever coming to fruition in the near future. By distancing themselves from the immediate establishment of a Jewish polity, Jews could affirm their loyalty both to England and to their religion and ethnic heritage. Jews themselves parallel it to the second coming of Christ, which like the restoration is a hoped for event, not directly affecting Victorian life.

One response to Mordecai's dream of national restoration is to distinguish between a "political" and a "spiritual" Zionism. By drawing these distinctions, reviewers could shift

the focus of Zionism from one of political action to a revival of religious faith and enthusiasm. The reviewer in The Jewish Chronicle says that the hope for the restoration is strongest among those desiring to carry out Mosaic Law:

[This desire] would be strongest in the hearts of those who long to carry out the Law of Moses in all the details and all the minuteness with which it has been laid down. It is the religious not the political idea which preponderates in the Jewish mind. It is this idea which gives to the sentiment its form and endows it with a soul.⁷⁴

These strongly orthodox Jews desire to observe the Law "in all its particulars" but have found this "impractical beyond the confines of the country given to the patriarchs." Their future polity will allow them religious freedom that cannot be found elsewhere. In this review, hopes for the restoration throughout history are paralleled with the desire for religious freedom. The "upheavals" in Israel's history "have had for their object the restoration of the national worship to which religious independence...was only to as serve a means."⁷⁵ Jews are placed in the same position as other religious denominations in England, and the reader is assured that "the political idea has long ago been extinct" and that religious freedom has been the prime concern of Jews.

Similarly, Harry Samuel Lewis also sees Zionism as having

⁷⁴Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 22 December 1876, p. 601.

⁷⁵Ibid.

a religious and a political component.⁷⁶ In The Jew in London jointly authored with C. Russell, he uses Daniel Deronda as a prelude to his discussion and seeming endorsement of this movement. He refers to Deronda as "George Eliot's Jewish hero," quoting at length from his speech on the need for a "political existence" for the Jews. In addition, Lewis agrees with Eliot's idea of "separation but communication" and her belief "that whilst every race should contribute to the common good of humanity, each should go forward in its own separate line of development, preserving its distinctive qualities."⁷⁷ His own ideas seem to echo Eliot's since he links the future of Judaism with "an ideal substantially at one with that of the Zionists." A "spiritual monotheism divorced from the principal of nationality" seems too different from the "old historical Judaism" to be satisfying. Lewis's view of Zionism initially appears to be an endorsement of those expressed in Eliot's book until he touches on the issue of Jews as English citizens.

Lewis uses the uncertainty of a distant future to support his claims that "the growth of Jewish national feeling is not

⁷⁶Henry Samuel Lewis (1863-1940) edited The Jewish Standard (London) from 1887 to 1889. He also wrote several books including The Jew in London (1901) and Liberal Judaism and Social Service (1916). Before moving to America, he served as the Rabbi for the Manchester Congregation of British Jews from 1908 to 1931, and was instrumental in the founding of the Jewish Religious Union. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Lewis, Harry Samuel."

⁷⁷ C. Russell, and H. S. Lewis, The Jew in London (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, [1901]), 232.

out of harmony with the claims of English citizenship."⁷⁸ The Jews should not abandon their desire for "the home of [their] fathers," or the belief that "the genius of the Jewish race will be best developed on Jewish soil," but for the immediate future, should concentrate on fulfilling their duties as citizens:

But, for many generations to come, migration to Palestine must be a slow process, and perhaps the Holy Land can never be more than the centre of Jewish life. Meanwhile our home is here, and we have to show ourselves worthy of the hospitality which we enjoy. The distinct but not divergent claims of citizenship and Jewish nationality may be exceptional but so is the whole history of Israel.⁷⁹

In fact, Lewis also indicates that the role of Palestine is unclear in "political" Zionism as well; he questions whether it will be "a 'legally assured home' for the Jewish race or simply a centre of Jewish colonization." Lewis expresses even more uncertainty when he questions the resilience of "political" Zionism itself:

Political Zionism may be a passing phase; but the ideas on which Zionism is based are eternal [that is the need to preserve each race]. The sense of solidarity which unites Jew with Jew, which opposes intermarriage, which is presupposed by such nation festivals as the Passover, will remain....⁸⁰

By describing "political Zionism" as a "passing phase," Lewis seems to undercut his support of the ideas expressed by "George Eliot's Jewish hero," so that they pose no immediate

⁷⁸Ibid., 233.

⁷⁹Ibid., 234.

⁸⁰Ibid., 233.

threat to the political stability of the Jewish community in England.

However, Lewis emphasizes that the development of "the sense of solidarity" may be the most important legacy of the Zionist movement. He argues that the idea of "national restoration" is only one aspect of Zionism, and that equally important is its emphasis on the celebration of cultural and national festivals and its disapproval of intermarriage. Enthusiasm for the Zionist movement should not displace that for Judaism itself:

After all, however, Zionism is only one side of Judaism, and although it may prove of supreme importance in shaping the history of our race, it has not become as yet, the determining factor in Jewish life and thought. Present-day Judaism owes much to those who regard their faith as a lofty spiritual influence and not as the rallying ground of a nation.⁸¹

In fact, he believes that far more attention should be given to fostering the spiritual growth of the community than on the Zionist movement:

There are indeed many indications of strong vitality within our community, refuting the charges of materialism and spiritual stagnation so often brought against us.⁸²

Lewis concludes by arguing that if Jewish existence is threatened with "absorption" it will be the results of "indifference" rather than directly related to the issue of restoration. Zionism has not only been separated into "political" and "spiritual" components, but as the progress of

⁸¹Ibid., 234-5.

⁸²Ibid., 235.

Lewis's argument suggests, the establishment of a Jewish polity is rather removed from the immediate concerns of Anglo-Jewish life.

The Jewish Chronicle provides another perspective on Mordecai's Zionist vision by positioning it in the context of nineteenth-century politics. The paper argues that the "difficulties" in establishing a Jewish state are not limited to the apathy or materialism of Anglo-Jews as some critics suggest:

These difficulties are inherent partly in the religious views and the position of the Jewish people, partly in the condition of the Holy Land, and partly in the relations of the Great Powers mostly affected by the Eastern Question to each other.⁸³

This response denies arguments like those of Hepworth Dixon's which "blame" the Jews for the decaying condition of the Holy Land, and see it as a product of their neglect. In this way, the focus of the debate over the restoration is shifted from the Jewish community to the complex religious and political conflicts in the East. The article provides numerous reasons why the Jews living in England should be able to do so without the stigma of religious hypocrisy, because they have not returned to their "homeland."

The paper recognizes the property rights and personal safety of the Jewish community as endangered by the immediate colonization in the East. Since Jews are expected to give up

⁸³Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 22 December 1876, p. 601.

their homes in Europe, it only seems equitable that they should be guaranteed some claim to the land in Palestine:

But the soil of Palestine now is either private property or belongs to the Government. How are the new settlers to get possession of it? Are the present owners to be expropriated? And if so, whence are the means to come?⁸⁴

While parcels of land had been purchased for farming, they would not have served the needs of a new polity. The paper is well aware of the value that its English readers placed on the protection of property rights, making this a formidable issue in the resettlement. The colonization of Palestine was not discussed in terms of military efforts by the Jews, but by an expectation or concern over the "Porte's" response to the community. The Porte would have to grant permission for the colonization effort as well as protection for the safety of the community, so that the colonists would now have some way "to defend themselves against attacks of the lawless Beduins." The Turkish government faced by financial and political unrest of its own and did not seem to be a very trustworthy guardian for Jewish colonists. Furthermore, Britain was already in the throes of the Bulgarian agitation by 1876, and that alone raised a series of questions about its ability to influence the Turkish government on behalf of the Jews.

Similarly, the struggles between "Protestantism" and "Romanism" are seen by The Jewish Chronicle as jeopardizing the well-being of the Jewish colonists. "Protestant England"

⁸⁴Ibid.

and "semi-Protestant Germany" might agree on this "project," but it seems unlikely that "the Roman Catholic Powers" would:

Would clericalism, which has confiscated for its Church all those prophecies which predict restored Israel's future glory, not perceive in such an event the rudiments of that consummation which might give it the lie, and therefore oppose it with might and main?⁸⁵

The paper is concerned with the "insult to Christianity" that the restoration would inflict with "the Jew lord and master in the land of the saints and apostles." The Jew would once again be "exposed to the cross fire of Christian and Mahometan fanaticism." European Christians and the Porte's Moslems must first reconcile their conflicts, or a Jewish return to Palestine is tantamount to denying religious freedom:

Palestine at present reminds the Jew not of his promised glory, but of past and present degradation, which Christian and Moslem jointly take care to inflict....Let but the Cross and the Crescent moderate fanaticism....⁸⁶

Within the context of this argument, the Jews are now victims of religious "fanatics" and oppressive governments and are guaranteed neither property, safety, nor religious freedom in this scheme of colonization. The paper implies that given these "difficulties" it would be untenable for the Victorian press to use this issue of "restoration" as a vehicle for anti-Semitic attacks on the Anglo-Jewish community.

Finally, the restoration remains unlikely because Jews have come to identify with the nations of Europe where they

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid., 602.

have taken up residence. The Jewish Chronicle attributes the lack of Jewish interest in the restoration to the acclimatization of Jews to England and "to the existing order of things":

True, the number of Jews...is not small in whose souls every such wish [for restoration] has become extinct....They that harbour it are too much imbued with the ideas characterizing their age and their respective countries, and too much identified with existing social habits and the current trains of thought to have any desire to remove from their atmosphere.⁸⁷

Picciotto also acknowledges this attachment observing that "the dreams of Mordecai and Daniel Deronda" will not find "speedy realization":

The Israelites have become too firmly attached to the countries of Western Europe...to be easily induced to abandon them en masse, and their magnates are scarcely likely to exchange the splendor and luxury they enjoy in European capitals, for a residence in an arid and semi-civilized land.⁸⁸

While Picciotto criticizes Anglo-Jews for their materialism, his own historical account of the community illustrates this "attachment" to England. His work indicates the emergence of a distinctive "Anglo-Jewish" identity that can be used to differentiate the community from other groups. He refers to "English Jews" as opposed to "German Jews," "Portuguese Jews," or "Damascus Jews." When describing the persecutions of Jew in Damascus, he explains how "the sympathy of their fellow citizens greatly encouraged the Jews of England in their

⁸⁷Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 15 December 1876, p. 585.

⁸⁸Picciotto, "Deronda the Jew," 603.

exertions" on behalf of the persecuted co-religionists.⁸⁹ This indicates both the discreet identity of English Jews as well as their ability to act as a distinctive group.

The uniqueness of the various communities of Jews throughout Eastern and Western Europe is also perceived by The Jewish Chronicle to hinder the restoration:

And how are we to coalesce a number of immigrants of different degrees of culture flowing in from all points of the compass, speaking different languages, trained in different habits...entertaining different feelings and following different trains of thought?⁹⁰

According to the paper, American Jewry exemplifies the disparities that would occur at the restoration: small congregations based on the place of origin would form and avoid groups from other countries. This arrangement is antithetical to English Jews, who have a Chief Rabbi and a more centralized system of religious institutions. These comments also suggest that Anglo-Jews think of themselves as distinctive in their "degree of culture" and group identity.

This chapter demonstrates that while the novel may affirm Jewish spirituality, it raises serious questions about how Anglo-Jews are to participate in English national life. Anglo-Jewish reviewers found that the novel's positive assessment of Judaism provides an useful argument for Jewish spirituality and also reinforced certain communal values.

⁸⁹Picciotto, Sketches, 353.

⁹⁰Review of Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot, The Jewish Chronicle, 22 December 1876, p. 601.

However, Mordecai's emphasis on the "thin coat of citizenship" and his Zionist vision only seem to prompt more attempts to establish the rootedness of the Jews in England, and in many ways, contribute to the problem that the Jewish press identified years earlier in literary works that depict Jews as "alien" rather than as "Englishmen of the Jewish faith."

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

In this study, I have attempted to show how the responses of Jewish readers to the works of Disraeli, Arnold, and Eliot illustrate the ways in which literary representations were used by Anglo-Jew to mediate between the claims of Jewishness and Englishness. The significance of a literary work in this process is conditioned by a number of complex factors, including the immediate concerns of Anglo-Jews, the reputation of the author within the community, and the text's figuration of the relationship between Englishness and Jewishness. My discussion of these literary works also demonstrates that they perpetuate assumptions about Anglo-Jews almost always characterized by ambiguity. Disraeli's arguments for Jewish political power and Jewish distinctiveness are made at the same time that he identifies religious conformity as a necessary basis for national unity, undermining the Jewish position as "Nonconformists." Similarly, Arnold's descriptions of the religious and cultural significance of the Hebrew Bible and Hebraism includes comments about the decay of the Jewish religion and as Cheyette has pointed out, the need to "Hellenize" the "racialized Jew." Eliot's argument for Jewish spirituality appears alongside one for Zionism,

implying that Jewish loyalty to the English state is indeed temporary.

Anglo-Jews often suppress the ambiguities in these works in order to construct seamless narratives of liberal progress and uncompromised social tolerance in English society. In this way, their use of literary representations had the potential to influence the material existence of the community by seemingly fostering the social and political stability of the Jewish community. References to literary representations of Jews were used by Anglo-Jewish critics in their arguments against anti-Jewish prejudice as well as in their attempts to demonstrate the rootedness of Jews in England. This may account for the persistent references to these literary works by Jewish apologists, since they function in ways far more complex than perpetuating stereotypes.

A final comment needs to be made here about the process of cultural analysis that informs the historical methodology of this study. I have implicitly tried to demonstrate the importance of literary history and biography to the reconstruction of a text's meaning. My use of literary history attempts to demonstrate the complexity and contingencies that underwrite acts of interpretations. The meaning of literary texts considered here and the interpretations of their Jewish readers are shown to be conditioned by social and political concerns that might go unnoticed without a cultural analysis. This historical

methodology provides insights about the complexity of the literary work as well as about the assumptions and values that readers bring to the texts. By demonstrating the complex function of the literary representation of the Jew, I have provide yet another argument for the necessity of historical and biographical literary criticism.

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VITA

The author attended Illinois Wesleyan University, receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Biology in May, 1980. Ms. Linderman began her studies in English at Roosevelt University where she completed a Master of Arts in 1985. At the University of Chicago, she furthered her studies with a Master of Arts, granted in 1987.

Shortly thereafter, Ms. Linderman entered Loyola University of Chicago to pursue her doctorate. She was the recipient of the University Teaching Fellowship and the University Dissertation Fellowship. With this generous financial support, she was able to complete her degree in 1997.

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Mary A. Linderman has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Micael Clarke
Associate Professor, English
Loyola University Chicago

Dr. Frank Fennell
Professor, English
Loyola University Chicago

Dr. Steven Jones
Associate Professor, English
Loyola University Chicago

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date

Micael M. Clarke
Director's Signature